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Russia: Yeltsin's Provincial Tours Viewed

MM2304131996 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Article by Aleksandr Gamov: "Yeltsin on the Street Quite Unlike Yeltsin in the Office"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This April has perhaps been for President Yeltsin the most "trip-laden" month in all his years of rule: Belgorod, Staryy Oskol, Khimki near Moscow, Krasnodar, Stavropol. Next in line are Khabarovsk and Almaty and between them a visit to China.

But in the two months before the elections it is not only the speed and altitude of movement of the thinner and fitter Boris Yeltsin which has changed, but also the nature of the trips themselves. For instance, the Belgorod trip arose spontaneously — Kiev fell by the way and B.N. Rapidly "changed his ticket." The Krasnodar trip and the Stavropol visit were prepared in advance but as Nikolay Yegorov, the head of the presidential staff, "complained" to journalists Yeltsin had so altered the preliminary route plans that they were unrecognizable. Here he allegedly grumbled: "In my opinion I am going not to wear out the seat of my pants at aktiv meetings but to campaign for President Yeltsin." According to the estimates of journalists who work with him constantly, the correlation between the president's meetings on the streets and in his "narrow circle of associates" is now 10:1 while before it was the other way round.

Yeltsin "on the street" is quite unlike Yeltsin "in the office and on television." First, he is not so carefully groomed. Second, his jacket is usually open so that one can see the fresh holes on his belt: "Look, he really has lost weight!" Third, when he speaks he does not hesitate because he is not looking at a piece of paper and even his famous "shta" and "panmayesh" [mispronunciations of Russian words for "what" and "you realize"] are seen simply as commas.

Something which was not there before — at almost all his meetings with ordinary people he is the first to turn the talk to his health. Actually, that it is not letting the president down and, according to his assurances, will not let him down, can be judged by the very strenuous schedule of visits. After a long flight Yeltsin comes down the gangway on steady feet, immediately gets into a helicopter or car — and just try keeping up with him. The dinners, to the chagrin of his hospitable hosts, have become less lavish and extended.

But the "flying Yeltsin" is not only showing his voters a suitable "presidential fitness." "Yeltsin, give us back sausage at 2.10 rubles a kilogram!" an elderly Cossack woman at the Novo-Mishastovskaya village attacked him almost with her fists. The president did not recoil but began to explain "bravely" that sausage can no longer be brought back but pensions can and should be increased. In recent years he did not descend to such "trivia." Or was it that he did not rise to them?

How the president hurried, what plain and annoyance were reflected in his eyes when on Krasnodar's central square a front line veteran in front of an enormous crowd refused to shake Boris Nikolayevich's outstretched hand and then suggested that he renounce the presidency and retire on pension. Yeltsin had never found himself in such a "fix." As soon as he had gone the veteran introduced himself: "Aleksey Fedorovich Zhikhorev." To the question, why did he snub the president, he replied: "His hands are covered in tears and blood."

I can attest that Boris Nikolayevich heard with his own ears people chanting: "Yeltsin's gang should go on trial." I saw with my own eyes among the fluttering red flags communist slogans like "Yeltsin means the war in Chechnya. Down with the war!" One can only guess what his feelings were. But he has now abandoned mass meetings on the streets which give him himself and Aleksandr Korzhakov's security service a mass of problems.

Moreover, during his recent visit to Budennovsk he even introduced an innovation. His bodyguards were following the president along the street with a microphone and a loudspeaker and it was not only the journalists milling nearby but also the entire surrounding area which heard voters "attacking the president" and Yeltsin reassuring them. Actually, the president's loudspeaker magnified with equal loudness the delighted cries of Yeltsin's supporters but it seemed that affected him less.

Evidently Boris Nikolayevich will, at least until the elections, have to carry this "public cross" through the Russian streets. As we know the Kremlin is now shaping a new image of presidential candidate Yeltsin. They have already established the "rungs" by climbing which the incumbent head of state can, his advisers believe, remain in power. They include the effective indexing and prompt payment of wages — both for workers in budget-funded enterprises and workers in enterprises of other forms of ownership — the introduction of order in pensions, "targeted" support for the poor, the lowering of the unemployment level, and the "anticipation" of strikes. And, of course, the peaceful solution of the urgent Chechen problem.

The president has set himself a difficult task: returning trust in the "bright future of reforms" to as many as possible of his former supporters, insulted and humiliated by the present regime. So he cannot manage without "street politics." As he himself admitted at one meeting in Belgorod: "I have come to look people in the eyes and speak frankly."

We can already note that the action "to instill trust" is having some success, as is borne out by the rise in the president's popularity ratings in the regions which he has already visited. Perhaps that is also explained by the fact that Yeltsin is, as he himself has put it, "not going to the voters empty-handed." You need a combine? You don't? Then what do you need? You need to provide amenities for your farm? Fine, I shall provide them...." But is it the president's job to hand out combines and provide amenities for farms?

And what are these visits to the people giving the president? During one trip I put that question to him directly. "When I meet with ordinary people irrespective of whether I am cursed or thanked for something, I have a keener sense of Russia," Boris Nikolayevich replied. "I realize that things are hard for many people now. At the same time I can see that people are not standing idle, they are working and raising their children.... And they are even smiling — bright, kindly smiles. That instills the conviction that for Russia and for each one of us all is not yet lost. We are being reborn...."

One more factor explaining why the "new Yeltsin" has appeared at the election starting block. It is obviously some inner feeling that is telling Boris Nikolayevich that his closest entourage's concerted chanting of "only Yeltsin for President" will not have the "deciding vote" at the forthcoming elections. So he has set off on a tour of Russia to extend a hand to those who so far have no intention of shaking it.

Russia: Zyuganov Notes Preparations for Formal Handover of Power

LD2304141796 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1300 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting with journalists today [Communist Party leader] Gennadiy Zyuganov said: If we can add to the 22 million votes cast for us in December, there is a chance that we will not just get through the first round of voting.

It was announced that the news conference would deal with the outcome of the summit and nuclear safety issues, but the communists' leader was very much more interested in future success in the presidential elections: [video shows Zyuganov addressing news conference]

[begin Zyuganov recording] We have to work out a procedure which will enable a proper handover of power. A draft procedure for the handover of power has been prepared, a draft law which will be submitted this week to the council of the State Duma. [end recording]

The main moving forces in the future policy of the communists will be sovereign power [derzhavnost] and social justice. In Zyuganov's opinion, these ideas will attract many supporters. Talks are proceeding, he said, even with people he had not reckoned on. There are also his loyal comrades: Working Russia, the Agrarians, and the trade unions. Two other leading political movements in the country — the Democratic Movement and the Central-Conservative movement — are less numerous. [video cuts back to Zyuganov at news conference]

[begin Zyuganov recording] There is one regular feature observed in all the elections we have had so far: prior to the elections the democrats' ratings rise sharply, regardless of their position or status, and after the elections they fall sharply back again. [end recording]

Russia: Zyuganov Willing To Cooperate With Third Force

LD2304120496 Moscow 2x2 Television in Russian 1100 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gennadiy Zyuganov has called into question poll figures demonstrating the recent rise in Boris Yeltsin's popularity. He also announced that he is preparing for talks with other presidential candidates.

[begin Zyuganov recording] We are holding consultations with all those committed to a stable situation in the country but, primarily with those on whose help, support, or simply neutral and benevolent attitude we are counting. The door is open to dialogue with the so-called third force, with the leaders of the third force. We are continuing contacts with them to discuss a whole range of problems. Recently we looked at problems with Glazyev [member of Democratic Party of Russia] relating to the economic policy of a government of popular trust. [end recording]

Russia: Zyuganov's Campaign Tactics Pondered

MM2404101196 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 20 Apr 96 p 1

[Article by Aleksandr Frolov under the "Observer's Opinion" rubric: "Regarding Tactics"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two months before the presidential elections a qualitatively new situation has taken shape in Russia's political life. Its essence is that society has been overwhelmed by an avalanche of presidential initiatives and edicts which constitute nothing other than implementation of the demands which the opposition advanced in the December State Duma elections, thereby winning. Indeed:

Chubays and Kozyrev — the most odious figures, who for five years had enjoyed the reputation of being totally unsinkable and of whom it was even said (and not for nothing) that their appointment was approved by no means in the Moscow Kremlin, but in the Washington White House — have been dismissed. The start of a fight against corruption has been revealed. Several major officials headed by [former General Prosecutor] Ilyushenko are under investigation.

Measures are being taken to repay the state's wage and pension debts. Compensation payments for pensioners have been introduced, and an initiative on indexing pensions has been aired. A promise has been made to restore the population's savings, which were devalued as a result of the price liberalization. Similar steps to help deceived investors are also promised.

A number of protectionist measures in support of Russian commodity producers have been introduced. Assistance is promised to the peasantry, high-technology production facilities in the military-industrial complex, basic science, education, and culture.

Attempts are being made to end the war in Chechnya by resuming the negotiating process. A withdrawal of troops, albeit a symbolic one, from areas inhabited predominantly by Russians has been begun.

A treaty between four republics on deepening integration and the treaty with Belarus on creating the SSR [Community of Sovereign Republics] have been concluded. The victory banner, in effect the Soviet state flag, has been granted equal status with the Russian state flag.

Other surprises cannot be ruled out either. Logically, as election day approaches we can expect further extremely radical steps. In particular, proposals to revise some results of privatization are very likely. Internal Affairs Minister Kulikov has floated a trial balloon about the possibility of nationalizing major oil and gas companies and commercial banks. Finally, at the last moment there may be a proposal to introduce into the constitution amendments aimed at slightly expanding the powers of the legislative branch of power.

The situation is not so much unexpected as not entirely familiar so far as the opposition is concerned. The last time something similar was to be observed was three years ago, when Yeltsin was preparing for the resolute fight for power and the dissolution of the soviets. There was a similar avalanche of edicts, a similar eruption of promises preempting possible actions by parliament. And exactly the same "preparatory bombardment" of rivals.

On the one hand the president is implementing a number of points of the opposition program, and on the other he is declaring that many of its prominent figures (Lukyanov, Varennikov, Ryzhkov) should be in Matrosskaya Tishina jail rather than the State Duma. This is a "slip of the tongue" that reveals more about the president's true intentions than any number of bland speeches. Experience shows that Yeltsin never makes such "slips" by accident. This is his "hallmark" — whipping up tension by any available means. He is using his campaign events not so much to achieve an honest victory in the elections as to create a confrontational psychological atmosphere conducive to all sorts of adventures. An attempt is being made even before the elections to organize in his own support a "universal expression of the people's will" which he could rely on in order somehow to "avoid" the elections.

The question arises: What should be our view of what is happening? According to the schemes of Yeltsin's campaign organizers, all this is supposed to cause confusion in the opposition ranks. The servile press is already exulting that the president is knocking "trump cards" one after another out of the hands of his main rival. The hope is clearly that the reaction will be inappropriate.

In order to ensure that this hope is not vindicated, it is important to prevent two main possible errors. We must not give way to very powerful inertia and respond to any actions by the regime solely in harshly negative terms — in a desire to immediately "expose" and "brand" them. It would also be a serious blunder to lament, still less publicly complain that the government is taking over opposition slogans.

I think that the time has now come to act differently. The need for a change of tactics emerged clearly as far back as the end of last year in connection with the serious objective change in the opposition's status within society.

Before December people's-patriotic forces called themselves (and were indeed) the **implacable** opposition. This term embraces a very great deal, but nevertheless almost the most essential feature of the implacable opposition is that it declines and **does not bear any responsibility** for the consequences of the state authorities' actions. It is preoccupied primarily with the problem of politically and organizationally strengthening its own ranks and gathering strength.

The substantial success in the State Duma elections sharply changed the situation. When it won around half of the deputies' seats the opposition became in the eyes of the people to some extent an "inbuilt element" of power and thereby lost the political and moral right to continue to decline responsibility for the situation in the country. Hence the new tactics and the new self-description adopted by people's-patriotic forces: the **responsible** opposition — in contrast to irresponsible opposition and irresponsible power in the shape of the president and the government.

The essence of the new tactic, in a nutshell, is that henceforth the opposition assumes a share of the responsibility for everything that is happening in the country and does not bide its time until it holds executive power but right now, even given the extreme lack of potential enjoyed by the State Duma, will use that potential in order to implement its own election promises.

Everything begins to look different in the light of the above. The president's recent actions merely confirm the correctness and validity of the opposition's demands. They become evidence that the opposition has sufficient strength and potential to substantially influence state policy. The positive shifts that are taking place are entirely down to the opposition and are the result of vigorous pressure on the president and the government. Thus what was conceived as an argument in favor of Yeltsin's reelection is in fact the **main election trump card** of G. Zyuganov, the presidential candidate of people's patriotic forces. He is not merely promising but ensuring implementation of his promises.

The hysteria kicked up over the State Duma's repeal of the Supreme Soviet decree on denouncing the 1922 treaty on the formation of the USSR becomes understandable in this context. The Duma preempted the president's integration initiatives, so it had to be discredited at all costs. But the hysteria was instantly halted as soon as it became clear that it was merely serving to propagandize the stance of the people's-patriotic forces and was placing the president in the awkward position of trying to catch up. It is clearly for the same reason that top officials are still maintaining total silence about the opposition's fundamentally important initiatives on checking the legality and economic consequences of privatization and on submitting amendments to the constitution. This enables us to assume that proposals in this sphere may soon be forthcoming from the presidential side.

It is now a matter of making correct use of the potential advantage. To this end the center of gravity of campaign tactics must be focused not on new promises but on demonstrating that promises have already begun to be kept. As for the fact that the president is seizing the initiative from the opposition, this certainly does not frighten us. After all, the most important thing is that they are implemented. Not only do we have no intention of preventing this, we will offer legislative support. But we greatly doubt whether our opponents will be able to implement the proclaimed aims consistently and to any substantial extent.

First, these are mainly steps dictated by campaign expediency — in other words, they are clearly grudging and temporary. There are no guarantees that everything will not be reversed if Yeltsin is reelected for a second term. Rather, it is certain that this will indeed happen and the promises will be forgotten, as has already happened repeatedly. It can also be assumed almost with certainty that Yeltsin will seek to dissolve the opposition-minded Duma. Therefore we must elect a president representing the parliamentary majority and acting in a coordinated fashion with it to consistently implement the new course.

Second, many of the measures that are being implemented, which require very great expenditure, do not rest on any firm socioeconomic foundation. The foundations of the state's economic policy remain fallacious. The current large-scale disbursements are being made by getting into debt, cutting investment, and playing an adventurist game of financial "pyramids." So a tremendous collapse lies in store unless the changes that are under way affect deeper strata of the economy. Only a new people's power can do this. So a change of head of state is necessary precisely in order to ensure that these positive trends are not only politically guaranteed but also economically bolstered.

Third, the incontestably useful and necessary steps toward integration of the former Union republics are nevertheless a backward step even compared with the letter of the agreements on forming the CIS, which envisaged a considerably higher level of unity than the "SIG" [Community of Integrated States] and the "SSR". After all, they proclaimed the preservation of a single economic area, a single currency, common borders, joint armed forces, and much else besides. Effectively what was proclaimed was the preservation of the Union, but...without the Union center. However, all this exists only on paper. So the signing of the new agreements against the background of the inability to fulfill the existing ones gives the impression of mere window dressing.

Fourth and last, the initiatives on settling the Chechen conflict contain nothing new from the military-political viewpoint and still totally ignore the socioeconomic aspects of the problem. But unless the reasons why Chechnya became a criminal free economic zone are eliminated, unless the channels for illegal trafficking of weapons, drugs, and duty-free goods via the Chechen "black hole" are blocked — unless this is done the politicians and the military will be able to achieve nothing. The roots of the war are to be found far beyond Chechnya, including in Moscow. And in order to really sever them, once again we need a change of president and government.

Summing up the above, I want to stress once again that the optimum line in the opposition's mass political work could be the following. There is no reason to deny the slight positive trends that have emerged in government policy since the start of the second Duma's work. But at the same time it must be persistently explained that these are the result of the active state activity of the responsible opposition both in parliament and outside it. But they are clearly grudging, half-hearted, and inconsistent, and the poor social and economic validity of these steps is clear. The overall conclusion is this: The more consistent implementation and consolidation of the positive trends requires that executive power be placed in the hands of those who are their effective initiators.

Our opponents may object that, yes, many mistakes and excesses have been allowed to occur, but since Boris Nikolayevich "has himself begun" at long last to rectify them, he should not be prevented from continuing this noble task. He has started it, so he should be allowed to complete the job. Shumeyko's RNK [Reforms-New Policy] movement, for instance, bases all its arguments on this thesis.

But does Yeltsin deserve to be trusted? In my view, the five-year history of his "reign" has long since made that a purely rhetorical question.

Russia: 'Contradictions' Seen in Zyuganov Election Platform

MM2304134896 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Leonid Pisanov: "Gennadiy Zyuganov's Seductive Promises"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chelyabinsk — The people of Chelyabinsk do not particularly favor the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF]: The recent State Duma elections were confirmation of that. Back then the Communists ended up in fourth place. Perhaps that is why the CPRF leader has paid a second visit to Chelyabinsk, this time as a presidential candidate.

Gennadiy Zyuganov's press conference was held in the former CPSU Oblast Committee Bureau auditorium, where the oblast duma now holds its sessions. He sat in the seat which was occupied for years by the first secretaries. Just like old times. Only the Russian tricolor reminded us of the present.

The journalists sincerely attempted to get to the bottom of the specific plans making up the candidate's very unspecific electoral platform. But contradictions kept peeping out from under the veil of generous promises and slogans, and logically it did not all hang together. Fulminating against the current authorities, G. Zyuganov posed as a defender of the people's interests and a protector of the poor and the orphaned. He tried to convince people that, if only they would vote for him, a "bright future" would be around the corner. Pensions would be higher, as would grants, wages....

It was clear from these promises that the printing presses would be switched on again and people would have to cart away their money in sacks on pay day. Just as happened after the revolution. This was confirmed by Gennadiy Andreyevich himself: "If pensions, grants, and wages were paid today at the average consumer level, store shelves would empty immediately." It turns out that under Zyuganov, who would be all things to all men in carrying out his election promises, the shelves would be empty and money would be worthless....

Gennadiy Andreyevich proudly announced that he now has the support of 150 parties and movements. But he was unable to say what would happen to his ideas when he came to power. Because all these parties, to use Anpilov's expression, would start "beating up" on him. Would not all his energies be squandered on infighting? After all, these parties are dominated by people whose programs are based purely on sloganeering and who have no time for economics.

Russia: Communist Workers Party Agrees To Back Zyuganov

MM2404105496 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Anatoliy Belozertsev: "RCWP Backs Zyuganov"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chelyabinsk — The Fifth Russian Communist Workers Party [RCWP] Congress has been held in Chelyabinsk. Over 150 delegates and invited guests gathered from all Russia's regions. They discussed the political situation in the country and outlined an action program for the presidential election period.

Various views clashed at the congress. Nonetheless it did prove possible to formulate a decision that suited the majority. Congress participants instructed the Central Committee to conclude an agreement with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Central

Committee on joint actions in the election struggle and then to sign an agreement on joint actions in support of Gennadiy Zyuganov, the single candidate from the bloc of left-wing forces.

An organizational plenum of the RCWP Central Committee took place after the congress. It once again elected V. Tyulkin as first secretary and Yu. Terentyev and B. Yachmenev as secretaries. V. Anpilov, leader of "Working Russia" and secretary of the RCWP's Moscow organization, joined the party Central Committee organizational bureau.

Russia: Military Rank-Holders Supporting Zyuganov Listed

MM2304144796 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 1

[List of signatories to the "Agreement on Joint Actions in Support of G.A. Zyuganov" presidential election bid: "They Have Signed the Agreement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The agreement on joint actions in support of G.A. Zyuganov, the collective candidate for the Russian Federation presidency from the people's patriotic forces, has been signed by:

Major General Yu.K. Andreyev; Colonel N.P. Babiy; Major General L.I. Babushkin; Hero of the Soviet Union Lieutenant General P.V. Bazanov; Admiral E.D. Baltin; Rear Admiral G.S. Belyashov; Colonel Yu.A. Belyayev; Rear Admiral V.F. Berezin; Colonel General N.M. Boyko; Major General A.I. Borisov; Colonel V.A. Boyarskiy; Colonel I.A. Bryukhovetskiy; Rear Admiral Bukan; Rear Admiral Yu.I. Buchinskiy; Major General V.S. Vaganov; Rear Admiral V.V. Vazhenin; Vice Admiral S.P. Vargin; Major General S.A. Vasilevich; Major General V.S. Vinogradov; Major General A.A. Vlasov; Major General V.A. Voronov; Major General V.M. Galeyev; Colonel General K.V. Gerchek; Lieutenant General V.V. Gladilin; Major General B.S. Golyshev; Lieutenant General B.N. Gormylev; Rear Admiral Ya.A. Grechko; Rear Admiral O.P. Grumbkov; Rear Admiral V.P. Denisov; Major General V.B. Yelchaninov; Colonel Yu.V. Yefimov; Lieutenant General L.N. Zhiznyakov; Colonel L.D. Zhoga; Major General V.P. Zaplatin; Hero of the Soviet Union Major General V.F. Zdunov; Rear Admiral N.V. Zelenin; Lieutenant General V.M. Zemzerov; Major General A.S. Ivanov; Major General P.A. Ivanchishin; Colonel General I.M. Illarionov; Lieutenant General V.V. Kazakov; Major General Yu.I. Kazarnovskiy; Lieutenant General Yu.N. Kalinin; Colonel General I.Ya. Kalinichenko; Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Karavayev; Major General A.I. Kirenyuk; Major General K.P. Kozeykin; Major General A.P. Kolnibolotskiy; Major General Yu.V. Koloskov; Colonel General S.F. Kolosov; Lieutenant General V.S. Kolchanov; Major General V.I Kondyurin; Admiral V.K. Korobov; Lieutenant General K.Ye. Kortelaynen; Lieutenant General V.G. Kostev; Lieutenant General A.Ya. Kostin; Colonel I.M. Krishkevich; Major General Yu.V. Kulikov; Colonel General O.F. Kulishev; Lieutenant General Yu.M. Lazarev; Major General F.A. Lamov; Colonel General N.I. Lapygin; Major General B.A. Litvin; Major General B.N. Loginov; Major General Yu.V. Lombikh; Major General V.P. Lysov; Rear Admiral V.T. Losikov; Fleet Admiral I.M Kapitanets; Colonel D.P. Kotov; Senior Lieutenant R.F. Mazdrin; Lieutenant General N.I. Makarov; Colonel General A.M. Makashov; Colonel General I.M. Maltsev; Major General V.S. Markov; Colonel General V.A. Merimskiy; Admiral V.V. Mikhaylin; Colonel General N.A. Moiseyev; Major General Ye.A. Muravyev; Major General V.P. Nagibin; Hero of the Soviet Union Colonel General Yu.A. Naumenko; Colonel General V.S. Nechayev; civilian N.P. Nikitin; Lieutenant General I.G. Novoseletskiy; Rear Admiral A.K. Noskov; Major General M.V. Osin; Admiral V.I. Panin; Lieutenant General Yu.I. Pankratov; Lieutenant General V.A. Ponomarev; Colonel General M.D. Popkov; Lieutenant General V.M. Prulikov; Major General G.A. Ryabov; Lieutenant General V.R. Ryabtsev; Major General A.A. Skrylnik; Major General Yu.N. Sokolov; Rear Admiral A.M. Starikov; Major General P.I. Stepanenko; Colonel S.A. Sarychev; Vice Admiral G.G. Tolstolutskiy; Hero of the Soviet Union, Hero of Socialist Labor Army General V.P. Tretyak; Major General V.P. Tkachenko; Major General A.I. Fokin; Lieutenant General Yu.L. Fotinov; Admiral N.I. Khovrin, Colonel General A.I. Khyupenen; Captain Ye.D. Cheremisin; Major General V.I. Cherechukhin; Hero of the Soviet Union Colonel G.G. Cherkashin; Fleet Admiral V.N. Chernavin; Major General A.I. Chinennyy; Major General P.A. Chirkin; Hero of Russia Major General A.Ye. Shvarev; Major General N.M. Shlikhunov; Major General V.N. Shorinkov; Colonel P.V. Shchekochikhin; Major General Yu.V. Yarygin;

From Moscow's Leninskiy Rayon Communist Party of the Russian Federation party organization of military veterans: Lieutenant General V.I. Anoshkin; Lieutenant General V.V. Bespalov; Colonel General Ye.S. Kolibernov; Lieutenant General V.S. Ryabov; Colonel A.A. Yasin.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Denies Campaign Cooperation With Zyuganov

LD2304173096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1459 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Interfax) — Russian Liberal Democratic Party [LDPR] leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has refuted reports that he and Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov are planning closer cooperation in the election campaign. Interfax reported such plans earlier Monday, citing an informed source in LDPR.

"The LDPR has always been and remains an independent political force which has spoken both against communists and democrats during the six years of its existence," Zhirinovskiy told an Interfax parliamentary correspondent in the State Duma.

"We have never held any talks with the Communists about anything. Neither we are going to speak with them about the formation of any blocs in the run-up to the presidential elections," he said.

He also refuted media reports that under certain conditions he was prepared to give his votes to the incumbent president.

Zhirinovskiy sees two possible reasons behind such attempts to "mislead the public" about his pre-election contacts with Zyuganov.

"Either it is an attempt to nudge us toward forming a union with the Communist Party, which is too shy to contact us directly, or the president's enemies are trying to distress him this way before his visit to China: you leave, and meanwhile an anti-Yeltsin front is going to strengthen," Zhirinovskiy said.

Russia: 'Third Force' To Choose Single Presidential Candidate

LD2304110196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1038 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW April 23 (Itar-Tass) — Three Russian presidential hopefuls, known as the "third force" which opposes both President Boris Yeltsin and communist candidate Gennadiy Zyuganov, have agreed to name only one of them as a presidential candidate one month before June 16 elections.

"We have agreed to determine one month before elections who (of us) is the most popular", eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov told Tass on Tuesday.

Besides Fedorov, the "third force" includes liberal reformist Grigoriy Yavlinskiy and hard rule advocate and general Aleksandr Lebed.

"If Grigoriy Yavlinskiy wins according to the rating, he would be the candidate, if Aleksandr Lebed does — he will", Fedorov said.

All the three have been already registered as presidential candidates and, if their estimated number of votes is united, their single candidate get around 20 per cent of support.

Fedorov said he would step down "with a sigh of relief" and "with satisfaction". The eye surgeon would then "go into the shade or agree to occupy less important positions in the executive bodies".

Fedorov also said the three candidates had agreed to adopt a joint Charter of economic reforms for the upcoming two years.

Fedorov said he trusts the popularity ratings published in the press, however, the three candidates are going to hold their own research with the help of independent analysts.

Russia: Babichev Comments on NDR Election Alliance Prospects

MM2304135096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Apr 96

[Report on interview with Vladimir Babichev, head of the "Russia Is Our Home" Executive Committee, by Aleksandr Batygin; place and date not given: "The Doors of 'Our Home' Are Open" — from the "Home and Homeland" section dated 20-26 April, p i]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first congress of the All-Russia Movement for Public Support for Boris Yeltsin in the presidential elections was held in Moscow quite recently. Next week a new event looms in the country's political life: Delegates representing the "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] movement will assemble for their third congress. What will be the main issue at the congress? I put this question to Vladimir Babichev, head of the "Russia Is Our Home" Executive Committee.

[Babichev] First and foremost, the congress will discuss active, all-embracing participation by our movement in the presidential election campaign, with one specific goal — that of doing everything in our power to ensure victory for Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. And the movement does have potential — and plenty of it.

Remember the labels that were pinned on the NDR when the movement was just being formed: from the "party of power" and "bureaucrats' party" to the crushing "homebodies" ["domushniki"]. The fate of a stillborn child, a crushing defeat in the State Duma elections, was predicted for "Our Home." Time has arranged things in its own way. Many parties and movements of the democratic opposition have receded into the deep political shadows, or even into oblivion, while the NDR has formed its own faction in the lower chamber of parliament and the number of its supporters is growing, and by no means only within the Garden Ring [i.e. in inner Moscow]. [Babichev ends]

...We met with V. Babichev immediately after the NDR Executive Committee session which set the date for the movement's congress — 25 April — and which also discussed two very important questions: the creation of a youth organization within the movement and ways of developing the NDR's cooperation with the trade unions. "No movement can count on success without the support of young people," V. Babichev says. "And we intend to cooperate closely with the trade unions in the Russian presidential election campaign."

Today the NDR has become an integral part of the All-Russia Movement for Public Support for Boris Yeltsin. A logical step, but still: Could one movement thus become dissolved within the other? Vladimir Babichev categorically disagrees with this way of looking at the matter:

"We have occupied a very specific niche within the new movement. And we did not join for the sake of numbers and keeping score. We have our own tasks.... No, it is not right to speak about some kind of dissolution. Moreover, the Yeltsin support movement is a temporary organization which is necessary and important specifically for the present stage."

It is well known that Boris Yeltsin's election platform will be published in May. NDR experts were among those taking part in drafting its basic concept. There certainly is no shortage of bright people in the movement. It is another matter whether there are common points and differences between the present presidential platform and the NDR's election program for the December State Duma elections. My interviewee stresses: "We are talking about different elections and correspondingly different documents and emphases — political and economic. But there are common goals too — the continuation of reforms, stabilization in society, and, most important, to ensure that our candidate wins, and stays on as president of all Russians.

"By choosing Boris Yeltsin we are saying: There is no more experienced, balanced politician in our homeland," V. Babichev goes on. "Times now are hard, transitional, and it is better not to change the president in midstream. The word 'stability' is a key word in the NDR program and in the president's as yet unpublished platform, although Boris Nikolayevich himself has already 'permitted' a glance at the text by announcing at the congress of his supporters the 10 theses and 10 main areas of work.

"I think the necessary tone and words of conviction will be found in this platform, and these will be followed by concrete action even before the election, so as to alleviate the lot of the most deprived section of Russians who have found themselves in effect below the poverty line," V. Babichev believes. "These are the people who will turn out to vote, and all the rest will see that they have shown concern for their nearest and dearest. Today the whole of economic policy and the reformist course must be turned not toward the Russian person in general, but specifically toward the person whom we have lost along the path of reforms. That is the person who must be raised up, encouraged, and instilled with confidence, using material means among others. Otherwise nothing will work."

Confidence in tomorrow permeates the annual Message of the Russian Federation President to the Federal Assembly. How is it being implemented in practice, what is the NDR's role in this? Virtually every section of the Message has a concrete economic, management, and financial charge.

"Since they call us the 'party of power,'" my interviewee explains — and he is, let me remind you, the leader of the Russian Federation Government apparatus — "we, as the party of the executive power, must translate the Message into practical terms. We studied the document and extracted concrete sections from it. That amounts to more than 50 draft edicts, some 30 government decrees, and nearly 15 draft laws. [no closing quotemarks as published]

These must be "launched" as early as April-May. And every edict or decree brings with it a whole slew of documents. So tackling the implementation of the Message is not only honorable, but extremely troublesome. But nobody is going to complain, because it is clear that it is ultimately a question of real changes in the Russians' lives.

Nonetheless, reasonable questions may arise among our readers — and not only them. True, it is noteworthy that edicts and resolutions are coming out in which the ordinary working person, the veteran, and the invalid who has lost his health are put first. But where is the money to come from for these pensions and wages for budget-funded employees? Does the NDR take part, as the "party of power," in public monitoring of the implementation of these vitally important matters?

This is what I learned from the leader of the NDR Executive Committee. There is monitoring — at government level. As for resources, a significant proportion of the aforementioned documents have the budget to back them. It is a peculiarity of the present situation in the Russian economy, V. Babichev explains, that in the second half of last year and this year for the first time the country's budget has had any possibility of giving people something. Normal budget funding has finally come to pass, a real reserve fund, although there are still plenty of hitches. Take, for instance, the situation regarding receipt of taxes. Nonetheless the government is not now racking its brains over how to help a specific university, theater, school, etc. After all, we were deprived of all that in 1992, '93, '94! The light appeared at the end of the tunnel, let us remember, only in 1995.

Envoys of "Our Home" will come to their congress next Thursday from all 89 Federation components. Naturally, things are not going smoothly everywhere. Whom can the NDR rely on today centrally and in the regions?

In V. Babichev's opinion, the time has come for painstaking, systematic work, without haste and without the desire to make an impression on admirers by citing impressive figures. It is much more important to strengthen the movement's ranks organizationally and find true enthusiasts. That is why the NDR, to use Vladimir Stepanovich's expression, is "cultivating" an aktiv — in the villages, rayon centers, and cities big and small. The main thing is to create organizations, cells — even of only five or six people each.

"Unless we become a real mass movement," V. Babichev says, "there are no prospects."

...Here it is perhaps worth stopping and returning to what is, frankly, a very well-worn theme, but without which no account of "Our Home" and its future would be complete. Namely, the fact that it has been the universal custom to call the NDR a party from the outset. But could "Our Home" actually become a party in the long term?

"It could," my interviewee replies, "but that is in the future...."

And he explains: In order to move on to a qualitatively new status and become a more notable political force, certainly every movement must eventually develop into a more structured organization setting more serious political objectives. But today the question of reorganizing the NDR movement is not at issue, V. Babichev stresses, it is not relevant on the eve of the elections. This is also the principled stance of our movement's leader, V.S. Chernomyrdin. Creating a party would present no great difficulty. But the NDR does not intend to "build" yet another Garden Ring party. The basis of a party has always been grass-roots regional organizations and mass support. When that exists, it will be possible to announce the creation of a party. The NDR already has more than 300 professional functionaries in various cities and villages, engaged in the creation of "primaries" — the word is bureaucratic, but that is not the point. Things are moving. In Volgograd Oblast, for instance, NDR organizations have been set up in all rayons, and grass-roots components are being successfully established in Lipetsk, Samara, and Leningrad Oblasts.

Were there mistakes in the setting up of the NDR? Yes, and plenty of them, V. Babichev admits. Contrary to the theory and practice of party building, it originated from above, not from below — as if by order. The present leadership of "Our Home," in the shape of the executive committee, speaks quite calmly and frankly about this. Ultimately the NDR is now on an upswing; it has (judging by the results of the State Duma elections) 10 million supporters and 6,000 activists in the regions. In the December elections the movement only made a prediction, a trial: Is there a prospect of creating a viable political structure on its basis? There is, but it must be remembered that the objective conditions, like rungs on a ladder, cannot be skipped; everything takes its own time, V. Babichev notes again and again.

Elections were held in Yekaterinburg this week to the [Sverdlovsk] oblast and city Duma, and in my conversation with V. Babichev I could not ignore their results. Some 70 percent of the votes went to supporters of the reformist course, including representatives of the NDR and of local public organizations that had united on its basis.

Only recently a favorite topic for political scientists was the battle of the two "strong men" of Sverdlovsk — Eduard Rossel, the present governor, and Aleksey Strakhov, leader of the NDR regional organization. The fight for the post of governor was surrounded with gripping details to suit every taste, and among other things "Our Home" was often castigated for supposedly influencing the continuing conflict.

In real life everything turned out much simpler. There was no NDR branch actually in existence in Yekaterinburg in the summer of last year, at the height of the showdown over which of the Urals "duo" was the worthier, and so the movement could not have exerted any serious influence, whether "plus" or "minus." Basically Rossel and Strakhov, who have no major differences in their understanding of reforms and democratic values, were fighting for personal power. "It is absurd to speak of any decisive participation by the NDR in those elections, it is far-fetched," V. Babichev says, commenting on last summer's situation.

The latest elections are another matter. Here the NDR's "staff workers" talked calmly with the Sverdlovsk Oblast leadership and with its opponents. After all, there was a real threat: If you engage in imaginary rivalry in the local authority elections, you might let in the contenders running on a Bolshevik platform. Common sense prevailed and a compromise was found for strategic purposes.

Whereas in the Urals political life is seething with activity, certain governors are in a hurry to declare: We are outside politics! The leader of the NDR executive committee regards this as devious. No governor or head of administration is outside politics. Their very position in society and in a given region makes them the biggest politician in their home oblast, kray, or republic. And now more than ever before each of them must define his position clearly: What political line do they hold, how do they conceive of the economy, what do they intend to do in strategic terms?

"Unfortunately, both reformism and democracy in the new Russia began with extremes, with destruction, extremism, radicalism," V. Babichev observes. "So even today not all the forces that cooperate with the NDR primarily for tactical reasons fit into the ideas held by the movement's leaders on the future of the movement. Nonetheless it is open to cooperation with everyone. Except, perhaps," V. Babichev stipulates, "the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation]. And even then, it would be possible to hold a discussion with them on some points."

[Batygin] "And with Boris Fedorov, judging from his recent speeches?"

"We were cooperating with him even before his memorable speech at the recent congress of the All-Russia Movement for Public Support for the President," Vladimir Stepanovich replies. "We are in constant contact. If you break down the tasks into tactical and strategic, we are set to cooperate with virtually the entire spectrum of political forces, with all parties and movements, except for those who are trying to drag us backward."

[Batygin] "And with Yavlinskiy? Apparently all the NDR's links with him are severed. What happened, did the ice pack break up and the ice floes move off in different directions?..."

[Babichev] "Categorically, no! It is too soon to draw such conclusions. Stating loudly today that 'we have gone our separate ways, like ships at sea,' is absolutely wrong, you should pay no attention to political rhetoric — life takes its course. Time will tell!"

I addressed my last question not to Babichev the politician, but simply to a man with a rich experience of life. Attributes of the past are returning to Russia today. There is the decision to hold a parade in Red Square, the return of the Banner of Victory, the holiday that is being arranged under a presidential directive for Heroes of the Soviet Union and holders of the Order of Glory. I asked my interlocutor: What does the return of these symbols to our life mean to him personally — a step backward, or, on the contrary, another step toward accord in society?

"I hope," he replied, "that both the parade and the Heroes' meeting will remain forever and turn into a good tradition. Or rather, this is not a new tradition, it is maintaining what our people had grown accustomed to. Let us have the Red Banner of Victory. I do not think we need talk about a return to the past. After all, in this way we are paving the way to equilibrium, to accord in our society, to realism in life, to all that is part of our life, our flesh and blood. 'Russia Is Our Home' supports this, I am sure, and everyone will regard the decisions adopted in the right light, with understanding."

Russia: Exchange Starts Bids on Election Results

MK2404061696 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Maksim Kashulinskiy: "The Exchange Has Determined the Rating of Presidential Candidates. Gennadiy Zyuganov Is in the Lead, Whereas Boris Yeltsin's Shares Are Going High"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian futures exchanges, whose main instruments now are contracts on state short-term bonds and dollar exchange rate, in the quest of new spheres of activity, have recalled that not only exchange rate of securities and foreign currencies but also political situation is liable to change. Yesterday the Russian exchange started to trade in rated futures contracts on the results of the first round of the presidential election.

The starting bids were based on percentages obtained in the public opinion poll conducted by the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion [VTsIOM] in the period of 4-10 April. It should be said that the results of yesterday's bids differed rather significantly from the starting rates (percentage obtained in the poll multiplied by 1,000). The greatest changes in starting rates were observed with respects to contracts on Yeltsin (from 1,800 up to 2,525) and Lebed (from 1,000 down to 480). According to the Russian Exchange analytical service, some 500 deals were made yesterday in total.

Such bids — somewhat exotic for Russia but common in Western countries — are planned to be held daily right till 14 June. Since by yesterday morning the Central Electoral Commission had registered seven candidates for president, for the time being only seven contracts will be on sale. Each contract will have a conditional denotation containing the first letter of a candidate's name. As new participants in the election run are registered, new financial instruments will emerge.

Participants in the bids are brokers, accredited to the Russian Exchange's department for futures deals on financial instruments. In addition, a broker can act as a mediator and make deals on behalf of any interested voter. As for the contract on the results of the first round of the presidential election itself, it is largely similar to other futures contracts. Trading is not a usual bookmaker's game; it allows to profit from resale of contracts.

A participant who is making a deal and is acting as a seller feels sure that in reality the percentage of votes to be given in the election for some specific politician will be lower than the one specified in the deal; a buyer, on the contrary, hopes for a higher percentage to be received by his people's choice. Based on the totality of deals concluded during one trading session, a rated price of the contract is calculated, which will be changing daily. Should a participant in the trading keep his obligations and retain the contract till 14 June, the amount of his actual gains/losses will be determined as a difference between the rated percentage of votes to be received and the real voting results for a presidential candidate.

Rated Prices of Contracts on Percentage of Votes To Be Given for Presidential Candidates, in rubles

	Rates on 22 April	Initial Rates
Zyuganov	2,640	2,600
Yeltsin	2,525	1,800
Fedorov	1,300	800
Yavlinskiy	1,100	1,000
Zhirinovskiy	610	800
Lebed	480	1,000
Gorbachev	121	100

Source: Russian Exchange's Analytical Department

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 24 Apr

LD2404073896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0606 GMT 24 Apr 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW April 24 (ITAR-TASS) — Follows a review of Wednesday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated April 24.

TRUD on Russian President Boris Yeltsin's official visit, beginning on Wednesday, to China.

The newspaper quotes Yeltsin's as telling journalists that "over the past three years, there have been big achievements in Sino-Russian relations, which have been elevated, to a basically new level of mutual understanding, trust and cooperation".

Touching upon the border issue, Yeltsin pointed out that "the two countries' border becomes an area of stable cooperation. A legal formalisation of the border has been finalised practically along its entire length. Demarcation work is under way".

IZVESTIYA on the history of Sino-Russian territorial delimitation which dates back to more than 300 years.

The newspaper gives the opinion of experts at the Russian Foreign Ministry, who believe that "the border is not being changed but it is being specified in accordance with treaties and international law".

Diplomats are convinced that "Russia does not need two contentious borders with China. One border — a common one — is enough".

Meanwhile, the newspaper recalls, the Maritime Territory Duma appealed against President Yeltsin's February instruction "On measures to finalise demarcation work".

The article points out that the Maritime Territory Duma members, it seems, have decided to torpedo the Agreement, which the Russian parliament ratified four years ago, on the State Border between Russia and China in its eastern sector.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on Sino-Russian relations.

The newspaper carries an interview with Li Fenglin, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Russia.

"The successful development of Sino-Russian relations is of great importance for stability and peace both in Asia and throughout the world. The Chinese people look forward to President Yeltsin's new visit to China, the visit during which a package of documents is to be signed", the Ambassador said.

The legal formalisation of the Sino-Russian border is of great importance for ensuring stability and peace on the border between the two countries, Li said.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on the presidential election campaign.

The newspaper quotes Boris Yeltsin as saying, when visiting Khabarovsk, that, "without exaggeration, the future of the country will depend on the outcome of the forthcoming presidential elections in Russia", due to be held in June.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the April 22 Interregional Congress of Reformist Forces in Russia in Yaroslavl.

The newspaper points out that one of the major tasks in the run-up to the presidential elections in Russia is to unite Democratic forces. Reports from the local level confirm that the regions have come to realise this earlier than the centre.

"Only Yeltsin stands a realistic chance to defeat Zyuganov. It is Yeltsin who should be a single candidate from Democratic parties and movements," the newspaper believes.

"A 'third force', which is now personified by Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Svyatoslav Fedorov, Mikhail Gorbachev and Aleksandr Lebed is not a real force so far," the newspaper notes.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA carries an interview with Vitaliy Ignatenko, Russian Vice-Premier and General Director of the Itar-Tass news agency.

In an interview headlined "I uphold the interests of the press in the corridors of power", Ignatenko pointed out that work with the media is a vital and constantly changeable process. "One must constantly feel the pulse of life and do one's job in the awareness that you are not a government representative in the press but, on the contrary, you uphold its interests in the echelons and corridors of State power."

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on reports that Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed during a missile strike.

The newspaper comes forward with the idea that "this could be a ploy by Dzhokhar Dudayev himself and that he would turn up in a couple of weeks in order to finally discredit the president and the powerful ministers."

At the same time the newspaper assumes that Dudayev might be really killed. "This is also confirmed by the fact that the separatist 'government of Ichkeria' has resolved to declare a three-day mourning for Dudayev".

Russia: Russia-PRC Trade Eyed on Eve of Yeltsin Trip

MM2404092796 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Georgiy Kunegin: "The Leaders' Intentions and the Realities of Life"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In recent years new political relations have developed between Russia and China. Or, as the diplomats and politicians say, the desire for a constructive partnership oriented toward the 21st century has become a reality. [passage omitted]

After the breakup of the USSR, the niches that became free were almost instantly filled by China's other trading partners: Japan, the United States, the Southeast Asian countries. And the negative effects were soon felt. The reduction in trade turnover was halted only in 1995, but the figures are depressing. Russia's share is something like 1.9 percent, and we are the seventh biggest trade partner. It is also worrying that the share of Russian exports accounted for by machines and equipment has fallen from 40 to 20 percent.

What is the reason for this? After all, as China's XINHUA agency states, "the two countries' economies are complementary." The problem is this.

Countries trading with China enjoy state support over a very wide spectrum in the exportation of goods and equipment. From credits and bank guarantees to judicial arbitration. Whereas Russian enterprises, joint-stock companies, and individuals have to "sink or swim" by themselves. But border trade and "shuttle" traders are one thing, and large-scale orders for the modernization of industrial enterprises and deliveries of equipment are another. In the fifties and sixties we built a lot in China, and our neighbors are now expressing the intention of enlisting Russian specialists in the reconstruction and modernization of national economic facilities. But the problem is this: Without state support, Russian entrepreneurs are simply out of the competition. Especially since a process of gradual abandonment of the barter system is now under way. Barter declined by one-third in 1995 compared with 1994.

The new turn in Russian-Chinese relations is attested by the fact that following the ratification of the border agreement in 1992, the demarcation of the border began. As of today, 98 percent of the border has been legally defined. In the course of the demarcation in the Maritime Kray region, doubts were expressed on two sectors. It is a question of a border zone with an area of less than 10 square kilometers in Ussuriyskiy region [kray] near the Granitnaya River, where there is neither housing, nor national economic facilities, nor agricultural land. And the second sector is part of the marshy left bank of the Tumannaya River. Assertions that Russia is giving up the Tumannaya estuary, which, incidentally, is 20 km from this sector, are totally unfounded.

There is also quite a lot of speculation about the "Tumangan" [as transliterated] international cooperation zone project, which is only just beginning to take shape and should not affect Russia's interests.

Something else is more important: The Maritime Kray authorities and the Chinese side are discussing the question of the transit of Chinese freight through the port of Zarubino, which should be boosted by the construction of a railroad branch in this region, which is nearing completion. It is also proposed to ship some 300,000 tourists per year from South Korean to China via Zarubino. The benefit to Maritime Kray is obvious, but will become a reality only if the border demarcation question is resolved.

Among other promising areas of Russian-Chinese cooperation there is the construction of a pipeline from Irkutsk Oblast to China. But that is for the future, since the project requires substantial capital investments and the participation of third countries in the region.

And now Boris Yeltsin's next official visit to China is due to take place 24-27 April. XINHUA notes that "the Russian president's visit and talks with Chinese leaders will give new impetus to the constructive partnership and cooperation between China and Russia."

Judging from the program alone, one can say that our president will have plenty of work to do. In three days he is to talk with PRC President Jiang Zemin and PRC State Council Premier Li Peng, local leaders, and representatives of business circles. And, of course, numerous contacts with ordinary Chinese, who always take an interest in Russia.

The packed program also includes the signing of more than 10 joint documents on cooperation in the power industry and ecology, the creation of a new mechanism for trade and economic ties, and the protection of intellectual property. But two documents hold a special place on this list.

It is proposed that at a meeting in Shanghai of the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and the PRC, an agreement will be signed on confidence-building measures in the military sphere along China's border with the four sovereign states. This is a unique document for Asia: For the first time, the five countries are concluding an agreement on confidence-building measures in a border zone with an area of 750,000 square kilometers, which is equivalent to the entire territory of several Asian states. Yet only recently this 7,500-km border was one of the tensest in the world. The agreement provides for briefing one another on exercises and troop movements and sending observers, and in future some reduction in the troop formations billeted along the border of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China.

During Boris Yeltsin's visit it is planned to sign a declaration on international questions and cooperation. Its essence is the two countries' vision of the present era, ways of building a new, just, rational international political and economic order on the planet, and the role of world organizations in this.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected in Beijing. And it is apposite to recall the ancient Chinese proverb which states: Good will should not be hidden in a dark room.

Our Checklist: The PRC

[passage omitted] Russia's trade turnover with China reached $5.46 billion in 1995, which is 7.6 percent above the 1994 level. Russian exports totaled $3.8 billion (an increase of 8.7 percent), and imports $1.7 billion (an increase of 5.3 percent).

Russia: Yeltsin Visit to PRC Set To Promote Relations

LD2304161296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1459 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Interfax) - The Russian Foreign Ministry's official spokesman Grigoriy Karasin expressed his certainty that President Boris Yeltsin's upcoming visit to the People's Republic of China would help strengthen Sino-Russian relations within the framework of a constructive partnership, and would aid their gradual development on a stable and long-term basis.

"The maintenance and development of stable, predictable, mutually beneficial, and friendly relations with China, our largest neighbor and a great world superpower, is one of Russia's constant policy priorities," Karasin told a Tuesday briefing.

This will be Yeltsin's second visit to China. He will meet and hold talks with President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Li Peng, and Parliamentary Chairman Qiao Shi, Karasin said.

"Within the context of a discussion of international issues, the president will touch upon the issues discussed during the Moscow nuclear summit," he said.

"During Yeltsin's visit, leaders of five countries [Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan] in Shanghai will sign the first-ever Asian agreement to increase military confidence-building measures in border areas," he said.

"The visit is meant to give a significant impetus to the development of trade and economic ties between Russia and the People's Republic of China," Karasin said.

Russia: Energy Projects With China Given 'Top Priority'

MM2304115596 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Apr 96 p 3

["Own Information" report: "River of Oil and Gas in 21st Century Will Start in Siberia and Flow to Beijing, Shanghai, and on..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just learned that the Russian Federation Government has approved the draft of a special agreement with the PRC. The agreement pertains to "joint cooperation in the energy sphere."

This agreement envisages the construction of oil and gas pipelines from Russia's East Siberia region to China, as well as the passage down these pipelines of energy sources bound for third countries on the Pacific coast.

But the loudmouths and age-old opponents of President Yeltsin and Premier Chernomyrdin should not rub their hands in glee as they speak about the latest "despoliation" of Russia. This draft agreement envisages the "exploration, development, and operation of gas and gas condensate fields on PRC territory...." In addition, joint studies will be conducted in order to determine the parameters of cooperation in the sphere of electricity generation.

If you consider that such fuel and energy giants as the Gazprom Russian Joint-Stock Company, the Integrated Energy System Russian Joint-Stock Company, the Krasnodar Kray and Irkutsk Oblast administrations, and the Ministry of Fuel and Energy are involved in these projects, it is easy to guess that cooperation in the energy sphere between our countries is being given top priority.

Two years has been allocated for formulating the feasibility studies for the gigantic project. However, it will be possible to begin construction work without waiting for the final results and begin work on any of the areas envisaged in the project as the feasibility studies are made ready.

Russia: INTERFAX Comments on Yeltsin's Visit to Khabarovsk, PRC

LD2304170696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Boris Yeltsin, now on his way to visit China, arrived in Khabarovsk on Tuesday where he is expected to stay until Wednesday afternoon.

Our correspondent accompanying the Russian leader reports that Yeltsin is scheduled to meet regional officials, visit the reconstruction site of a bridge across the Amur river and get involved in a wreath-laying ceremony at the local war memorial.

Before he flies out to Beijing at about 3.30 p.m. on Wednesday, the president may visit a chapel put up to the memory of the victims to political reprisals.

Speaking on arrival in Khabarovsk, Yeltsin said the country's presidential campaign was in full swing. He spoke of presidential proxies, campaign headquarters and support groups in his favor being set up throughout Russia. "Canvassing is under way on the ground as well as an advertising campaign," he said.

On his planned tours, the Russian leader said next would be very hard for him because of 16 trips he would have to make to different parts of the country.

Yeltsin announced bringing a Far Eastern development plan up to the year 2005 with him saying he would endorse it there and then if no objections were raised during a meeting with regional officials.

Many in Khabarovsk say the plan endorsed by the Russian government will probably be given the status of a presidential program. Yeltsin is also expected to sign a number of documents including a decree on a federal program of support to strategically important regions in Russia's Far East.

Regional officials say the program is caused by the need for fuller incorporation of Russia's eastern parts into the dynamically developing economies of the Asian Pacific region.

The status of a federal program will help the specified regions towards priority budget allocations including foreign loans and credits to implement their plans.

The program envisages a package of measures to develop sparsely-populated regions of the Far North and set up a large industrial center, Komsomolsk-Amursk-Solnechnyy, on the basis of local defense and mining businesses and related research centers.

Earlier, the economics ministry was appointed to coordinate the program, with departments concerned expected to implement it in specific directions.

The defense and energy industries dominated the agenda of a meeting of regional officials and industrial managers on Tuesday attended by First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kadannikov, Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Shafrannik, Railway Minister Gennadiy Fadeyev and First Deputy Economics Minister Andrey Shapovalyants, the regional administration's press office told Interfax.

It was pointed out that until recently, about 60 percent of the regional workforce and half of the regional industry were involved in the production of defense-related wares. Many of the defense-related plants which are situated in local towns are brought to a standstill leading to rising tension in the region.

The region is badly affected by a lack of its own energy sector while the high cost of coal production and railway shipments make all of the regional products uncompetitive.

Participants in the meeting were unanimous that a well-conceived government program of support for the Far East is needed rather than separate federal programs.

Defense Chief Pavel Grachev who is also part of the government delegation met military district commanders and visited several army units there.

Russia: Primakov To Accompany Yeltsin on Visit to China

LD2304105496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1019 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov will accompany President Boris Yeltsin during his official visit to China.

It is expected that he will inform the Russian leader, en route to Beijing, of the results of his working trip to the Middle East which ended on Monday. Primakov was in the region on an instruction from the Russian president to help reach an understanding on an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon.

Summing up the results of his mission, the Russian minister said that the Lebanese-Israeli crisis can be settled by implementing the U.N. Security Council resolution on a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon.

Following this, it will be possible to shift the responsibility on the Lebanese and Syrian governments, since Syrian troops are also in Lebanon.

The Russian minister will report Yeltsin the results of his trips to Syria, Lebanon and Israel where he met the leaders of those countries, as well as his contacts with U.S. State Secretary Warren Christopher and talks with the foreign ministers of France, Italy and Iran.

Itar-Tass learnt on Tuesday that the head of the Russian Foreign Office will go to Romania right after the Beijing visit. While on a Romanian visit, he will participate in a meeting of foreign ministers of the Black Sea economic cooperation zone.

He will also hold several meetings and talks with Romanian leaders in Bucharest.

Romania is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe with which Russia has not signed a political treaty. Talks on this topic have been going on for four years.

However, an insistent desire of the Romanian side to include a wording in the text of the document on the need for overcoming the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact remains a stumbling block for the signing.

As a result of this pact, the Soviet Union received Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in 1940, the territories now belonging to Moldavia and Ukraine.

In this connection, the Russian side regards as inexpedient to include a provision into a bilateral treaty, which directly affects the interests of third states.

Russia: Yeltsin Arrives in Beijing; To Meet Top Leaders

LD2404084896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0700 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By special correspondents Marat Abulkhatin, Grigoriy Arslanov, Vyacheslav Tomilin, Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beijing, 24 Apr — At 1440 Beijing time the plane of the Russian President Boris Yeltsin landed in Beijing's "Shoudu" airport. The official visit of the leader of the Russian state to China has started.

The Russian president will hold talks with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Li Peng. He will also meet Qiao Shi, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress. It is anticipated that a Russo-Chinese political declaration and a package of documents will be signed.

During Boris Yeltsin's stay in Shanghai, he and Jiang Zemin, together with the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, will sign a five-sided agreement on confidence measures in the military sphere in the border area.

Russia: Lukin Elected Head of European Parliamentary Assembly

LD2304124696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1137 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Mikhail Kalmykov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STRASBOURG, April 23 (Itar-Tass) - "The recent summit on nuclear security in Moscow has, undoubtedly, influenced Russia's prestige in the Council of Europe, but a real change in the attitude of the international community to Russia can be expected when it becomes strong both economically and politically," Vladimir Lukin, head of the Russian delegation to the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, who was elected chairman of this organization on Monday, said.

Although this post is rather "ceremonial", it offers an opportunity to participate on a full-fledged basis in the work of the board of the Parliamentary Assembly, and influence the choice of problems on the agenda, draft resolutions and implementation of the budget, Lukin said, adding that "we were offered an opportunity to be in the focus of developments taking place within this biggest and most influential of international organizations."

Lukin believes that the task at present is to properly make use of the opportunities which are offered and make the maximum contribution to Russia's democratic development. Substantial experience has been accumulated in recent years, Lukin said.

Lukin believes that it is "quite natural" that participants in the present session have again raised the Chechen issues, which has long been a stumbling block to Russia's entry to the Council of Europe. "As long as the war continues and people are dying, the concern of the European community is quite understandable. Politics is a common cause and I see nothing wrong in the creation of a group on Chechnya which includes two representatives from Russia - President of Chuvashia Nikolay Fedorov and MP Vladimir Averchev," Lukin said.

Lukin said that the establishment of this group should not be regarded as interference in Russia's internal affairs."If its activities are of benefit to the peace process, such efforts should be only welcomed," Lukin said. Another thing is an extent to which the group might prove to be really useful. At any rate, it will be useful so that the Council of Europe might better comprehend the essence of the Chechen problem since the lack of first-hand knowledge about the situation might result in a superficial judgment," Lukin said.

Russia: Summit Discussions, Results Reviewed

MM2304114396 Moscow TRUD in Russian 23 Apr 96 pp 1, 6

[Commentary by Aleksandr Ptashkin and Anatoliy Repin plus "Postscript" by Vissarion Sisnev: "The G-7 Cannot Do Without Russia. This Was Demonstrated Once Again by the Moscow Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Strictly speaking, the G-7 is not an organization but an informal club of the top leaders of the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada, and Italy. They meet for a couple of days once a year to discuss the world's problems in broad terms. Instead of decisions they make statements in the form of declarations of intent which do not impose strict commitments upon themselves, let alone other countries. But as the members of the G-7 club occupy dominant positions in the world's finances and economy and possess huge military potential and global political influence, their meetings set the tone for those aspects of the development of the international situation which the G-7 discusses. In this regard, the Moscow meeting was perhaps more significant than previous ones.

Starting with the fact that it was held outside the normal timetable (the next regular G-7 meeting is due in Lyons in the summer) and was devoted to a single special topic — nuclear safety. The format of the meeting was broader than the "seven." For the first time the Russian president took part in it from start to finish and, what is more, in the capacity of cochairman, so in this case a G-8 summit was already at work. Moreover, the EU was represented in the person of European Commission President Jacques Santer, while Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma was invited to the session on the afternoon of 20 April, when the Chernobyl situation was discussed.

The participants in the meeting quickly reached agreement on the agenda topic, adopting a declaration which makes safety a priority in the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It was this which was stressed on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe. The document reflected what Boris Yeltsin had urged in his speech of welcome to the summit: The need for environmentally clean and economically profitable nuclear technologies with absolute adherence to the principles of safety, reliable guarantees of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, and prevention of the illegal circulation of nuclear materials. The latter question will be jointly taken up by the special services of Russia, the United States, and other countries. A difference in the approaches of Washington and Moscow to Russia's supply of peaceful nuclear technology to Iran was noted during discussion of these problems.

The intention of the G-7 and Russia to sign at UN headquarters this fall an international treaty completely banning all nuclear tests is encouraging. For the treaty to become all-embracing in nature, however, it is essential, as the Russian Federation president pointed out, that the PRC agree this step: Since France, after provoking a barrage of protests, recently completed its series of explosions in the Pacific, China remains the only power which has not abandoned a program of further tests.

However, the Moscow summit statement can scarcely wholly reassure a public worried by problems of nuclear safety. Leonid Kuchma's report on Kiev's decision to close down the Chernobyl AES [nuclear electric power station] by 2,000 caused absolute satisfaction. It is now up to the West to fulfill its promises to allocate Ukraine $3 billion in different ways. Quite a number of ticklish problems raised at a meeting of public organizations on the eve of the Moscow meeting were left outside the ambit of the meeting. For example, its participants ignored the position of military nuclear plants, including those on nuclear submarines, which have come to the end of their service life and the state of storage facilities containing military radioactive waste.

The pressure of environmental campaigners on governments will scarcely slacken much after the Moscow meeting. But given that all the blame in these questions is often pinned on the Russians alone, it is not superfluous to note the opinion of President Clinton expressed at the news conference on 20 April: According to him, the problem of nuclear safety, including reactor safety, affects not just Russia — it exists in other countries too — while the Russians have, the U.S. president is convinced, made considerable efforts in recent years to enhance the reliability of their AESs.

The leaders who assembled in Moscow were forced to divert their attention away from the main topic of the meeting and react promptly to the armed conflict in the south of Lebanon. Their first session, on Friday evening, was almost entirely devoted to this situation. The summit participants came out in favor of the swiftest possible cease-fire. Yevgeniy Primakov and Warren Christopher flew to the conflict region, where French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette was already present, so (a very rare event!) the five-hour talks between Yeltsin and Clinton on Sunday were held without their chief diplomats.

Judging by the presidents' news conference, the situation in Chechnya and Lebanon, questions of NATO expansion, disarmament, and other topics were discussed at this swift Russian-American summit, for which the U.S. president specifically stayed on an extra day in Moscow. As regards NATO's eastward expansion, the Russian Federation and the United States maintained their previous positions, but both leaders did agree that "NATO expansion will not be accelerated for a while."

The presidents did not ignore the Chechen conflict either. Boris Yeltsin expressed confidence that the peace settlement plan proposed by him is being carried out and will be implemented. Bill Clinton observed that the United States "regards Chechnya as part of Russia" and has always advocated a political solution of the problem.

No matter how important the topic of nuclear safety is or how pressing the questions raised at the bilateral talks between Clinton and Yeltsin are, all this was in one way or another discussed against the backdrop of the election campaign in Russia. Clearly mindful of the fuss generated recently in the U.S. press over leaks about Clinton's promise to support Yeltsin during the elections, allegedly made during their meeting at Sharm al-Shaykh, the U.S. president painstakingly sought to avoid any direct expression of preferences. When asked about the Russian elections, Clinton stressed that this is a matter for the Russians themselves and expressed his confidence that the "Russian people will look forward rather than backward." But at the joint news conference with Yeltsin on Sunday, when the Russian president voiced his unshakable confidence that he will win, Clinton, who was sitting alongside him, showed by the whole expression on his face that he agreed with his friend Boris' aspiration. It cannot be ruled out that some people in Washington will try to create a fuss on account of this....

Regarding his meeting with certain leaders of the Russian political opposition at the U.S. Embassy, Clinton explained it as follows: It is customary for U.S. presidents to hold such meetings during visits to democratic countries. Russia is a multiparty country, therefore he meets several figures simultaneously.

Be that as it may, the Moscow summit demonstrated the attention paid to Russia by the leading world powers and Russia's role in the international arena. The meeting's host sought to ensure that the actual setting of the summit — the sessions were held in the Russian Federation president's restored residence — strikingly symbolized renewed Russia. The malachite, gilt, crystal, and carpets enraptured the eminent visitors. Clinton's Oval Office is really quite unlike Yeltsin's. Is that not why it proved awkward to raise the question of new loans?

But as regards Russia's obtaining full membership of the club of the richest and most powerful, the luxurious setting of the presidential residence did not help: Moscow will again take part in the next summit, in Lyons, as it did in Halifax, according to the 7 plus 1 formula. Boris Yeltsin has bluntly said that he is not happy with this. If it is a question of Russia's solvency (the rich are always being asked for something), then in terms of giving credit to foreign countries, above all the CIS, Russia more than meets this condition of entry to the G-8....

Postscript: Our correspondent Vissarion Sisnev reports from Washington.

The American press cites Thomas Cochrane, representative of the Washington-based Council for the Protection of Natural Resources, who gives the following assessment of the summit: "Russia's Ministry of Atomic Energy is the winner as regards problems of safety. It has succeeded in postponing the closure of nuclear reactors which cause alarm."

But the general result was summed up by President Clinton as follows: "We have taken yet another step back from the nuclear abyss."

Russia: Summit 'Devalued' by Leaders' Focus on Domestic Concerns

MM2304092896 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 7

["Summit Postscript" by Sergey Maslov: "The Seven Still Waiting To Admit the One to Their Ranks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our people do not fly across the ocean to visit a bakery store. But the U.S. President's mysterious American soul can permit him such an amusing diversion. Bill Clinton's Russian voyage was shrouded in mystery. The President was clearly in no hurry to come to Moscow. He spent more time seeing the sights of St. Petersburg and its environs than on the solution of the global problem of the present day which was the main topic of the summit conference — the problem of nuclear safety.

The President with his American directness first wanted to see some of the sights and... some bread. That is why he popped into a bakery store on Nikolskaya Street.

Bread, of course, is vital to us all. But according to the Russian custom there should be some salt as well to welcome a guest. Where was it? What was the essential ingredient of the event which (insofar as journalists were allowed access to it) created the impression not of being a G-8 or even a G-7 with a few pluses or minuses but of a high society gathering. It is obvious that many of B. Yeltsin's guests could not get away from their domestic daily problems. British Premier Major was hoping that the visit to Russia would enable him to clarify relations with Clinton over the "unduly warm reception" afforded in the United States recently to Anthony Blair, the leader of the Labor Party, the main opposition party in Britain. The gentleman from London's 10 Downing Street was able to use the platform of the Moscow nuclear safety summit to call for... the abolition of the EU embargo on the export of British beef. As far as could be judged from the information that filtered through, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto was almost more concerned about the South Kuril islands which are under Russian jurisdiction than about the Russian radioactive waste dumped in the same sea off the shores of his country. German Chancellor Kohl had an opportunity to speak out during a recent visit to Moscow. The German press even advised him: The best thing that he could do this time for friend Boris would be not to say anything but to keep silent. There was a special atmosphere surrounding the figure of French President Jacques Chirac, who recently provoked a worldwide allergy by his stubborn determination in the pursuit of the national nuclear test program. To be blunt, this figure of yesterday's sinner transformed overnight into a righteous man did not inspire any special trust as cochairman of a summit on nuclear safety.

The documents produced by the meeting — the declaration on nuclear safety, the statement on a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, a statement on Ukraine, and a program to combat the illegal circulation of nuclear materials — revealed far more scientists' and experts' sweat than political luster. However, the specialists' opinions, including the difference in their approaches to the solution of the problems, of course, were covered with a political gloss aimed at creating the appearance of the summit as an unconditional success. Hence the abundance of generalities and vagueness.

The main political factor which left its mark on the course and results of the meeting is, of course, the election of the Russian head of state, which is due in eight weeks' time, no matter how much Yeltsin might deny it. Consciously or not this theme was part of the overall picture of the discussions and one way or another distracted their participants from the main issue. Thus the nuclear safety problem itself was devalued in the public's eyes. This is an example of how short-term political interests can harm the most noble idea.

It seems that the treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban could be signed as early as this year even without a statement from the leaders of the G-7 and Russia. But it will not function unless China accedes to it: The latter, as is well known, holds a special position on this question. Even before the summit began many observers were bewildered: Why was it not possible to invite a representative of the fifth nuclear power — if only as an observer — to the Moscow meeting? The question was left unanswered.

Russia: Moscow Summit's Results Questioned

MM2304110396 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 3

[Article by Vasiliy Safronchuk: "Prestige in Abeyance. What Did Russia's President Gain by Cajoling the G-7 in the Kremlin?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the last few days the attention of Russia's and the world's public was drawn to the meeting of the heads of state and government of the seven most developed countries in the world and Russia. Taking part in it were Presidents Jacques Chirac of France and Bill Clinton of the United States; Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany; Prime Ministers Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan, John Major of Britain, Jean Chretien of Canada, and Lamberto Dini of Italy; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia. The summit of the G-7 with Russia's participation was devoted to an extremely important problem — to ensure nuclear safety. As is usual for such occasions, the leaders' meeting was preceded by painstaking work by diplomats and experts who prepared the necessary documents in draft form. This is only natural, bearing in mind that the [leaders'] talks lasted just a single day, they held only two sessions and hardly had an opportunity to state their positions. B. Yeltsin presented a nine-points plan approved at the 10 April session of Russia's Security Council.

The meeting resulted in the adoption of four documents: 1) Declaration on the outcome of discussions on the problems of nuclear safety; 2) Program for the struggle against illegal circulation of nuclear materials; 3) Statement on readiness to conclude a comprehensive and complete nuclear test ban treaty; 4) Statement on the Chernobyl AES [nuclear power station]. Despite all their significance, the importance of these documents ought not to be overestimated. It must be borne in mind that the G-7 meetings are informal and any decisions adopted at them are recommendations and wishes rather than international treaties and agreements which are binding on all parties. Practice has shown that many of the G-7's recommendations remain nothing but wishful thinking. The first document is indeed only a statement of intention by the meeting's participants to develop broad international cooperation in the elaboration [razrabotka], production, and use of new, safe, and economically advantageous nuclear power engineering facilities. They also advocated the expansion of nuclear-free zones and the development [razvitiye] of new technologies for inventorying and storing nuclear materials.

But Russia's main proposal in the sphere of ensuring nuclear safety was not taken into consideration. The plan approved by the Russian Federation Security Council contained an important provision — the nuclear weapons of all nuclear powers ought to be concentrated within the boundaries of their own territories. This proposal was turned down by the G-7 and was not included in the declaration. Furthermore, at his news conference Chancellor Kohl declared Germany's negative attitude toward the idea of a nuclear-free zone in Central and East Europe. In practical terms this means that the United States retains the opportunity to deploy missiles with nuclear warheads on the territory of Germany and other NATO members. Taking into account the plans to expand NATO via Central and East European countries, this creates a threat that U.S. nuclear missiles may appear right next to Russia's borders. Meanwhile, this year Russia will complete the withdrawal of its nuclear arsenals from Belarus and Ukraine and their dismantling. Thus, U.S. nuclear weapons will get closer to our borders while Russian weapons will be pulled further back. This is a gross violation of the principle of equal security which underpins the SALT I and SALT II treaties.

The second document — the program for the struggle against illegal circulation of nuclear materials — provides for collaboration between Russian and Western special services in this sphere. It also provides for the elaboration and implementation of a system for detecting possible secret nuclear activities. This program is fully in line with the interests of Western states, which are extremely worried by the possible leaks of nuclear materials from Russia to so-called rogue countries (meaning Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and others). It is well known that the Western press regularly carries planted stories about the smuggling of weapons-grade plutonium from Russia. We recall last year's sensational story about the arrest of two smugglers at Munich Airport, allegedly trying to smuggle weapons-grade plutonium from Russia. Later on it emerged that this "contraband" had been planted by...the German special services. Think of how much is being written to the effect that, due to shortage of funds, the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy nuclear stores are poorly guarded, that poorly paid Russian specialists, who are experiencing material hardships, are interested in exporting and selling nuclear materials abroad, and so on. Prior to the Moscow meeting, U.S. Senator Nunn declared in his statement to a Senate committee: "For the first time in history we are encountering the collapse of an empire which had 30,000 nuclear charges. Coupled with organized crime, this poses a top priority problem for U.S. security." And CIA Director John Deutch, addressing a Congressional committee, said: "...The Russians simply lack the proper financial resources to ensure the safety of their nuclear military complexes and adequately efficient inventorying of stored nuclear materials, creating the danger that nuclear materials could be moved elsewhere." It was no accident that a correspondent raised this question at the joint news conference on the summit's results held by B. Yeltsin and Jacques Chirac. B. Yeltsin was forced to offer explanations and assurances that, from the viewpoint of nuclear safety, Russia "is in a good state."

The third document — on the need to conclude as soon as possible, by next September, a comprehensive and complete nuclear test ban treaty — could only have been welcomed had it not been for two "but's." First, it does not take into account Russia's wish to preserve the so-called small-yield laboratory explosions. Second, it has not been signed by the fifth nuclear power — China. Meanwhile, it is well known that China continues to conduct nuclear tests and would like to reserve the right to conduct nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. India also insists on this. True enough, B. Yeltsin promised to "work on" the Chinese leadership during his forthcoming visit to China this week with a view to persuading it to join the agreement on nuclear tests. But since this agreement was reached bypassing China, B. Yeltsin is hardly likely to succeed. If the G-7 leaders really wanted China to join the agreement on nuclear tests, they should have invited Jiang Zemin to Moscow as an equal partner. This question was raised by journalists, but the G-7 leaders let it be understood that China itself should have asked to be invited to the Moscow meeting. But this would have been an obvious breach of diplomatic protocol. If the G-7 had been really keen on its participation, China should have been given an official invitation from the meeting's cochairmen B. Yeltsin and Jacques Chirac. Beijing prizes its prestige. As a matter of fact, to judge by everything, China — in contrast with Russia — is not rushing to join the G-7. It values its independence and does not need "recognition" by this Western club, aware of its own ideological and political incompatibility with its present members.

The agreement on the Chernobyl AES can only be welcomed. But the consent to dismantle the Chernobyl AES by the year 2000, beaten out of Kiev by the G-7, can be implemented only if Kiev receives the promised economic aid and credits amounting to $3 billion.

The majority of Western commentators agree that B. Yeltsin, on inviting the G-7 leaders to Moscow, was worried not so much about nuclear safety but about boosting his own prestige as world leader and gaining the West's support ahead of the forthcoming presidential election. True enough, the Western leaders emphasized by all possible means that they do not intend to tell the Russian voters whom to elect as president. "Neither Russia's president nor anyone else intends to tell the Russian for whom to vote," Clinton said, "they will go to vote by themselves and will decide their future by themselves." A little later, however, at the news conference on the results of his visit to Moscow, that selfsame Clinton declared that "the forthcoming election in Russia could influence future relations between the United States and Russia." By way of a distraction, meeting were organized between Major and Clinton and some opposition leaders, including G.A. Zyuganov. But even this put B. Yeltsin on his guard and he advised the U.S. President not to meet with the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] leader one-on-one. But the view about the "election campaign" nature of the Moscow meeting was so widely held that B. Yeltsin, at the aforementioned news conference with Clinton, felt it necessary to "hint" to journalists that this was not true. The four-hour long and possibly last meeting between B. Clinton and B. Yeltsin in the Kremlin and the talks between them merit separate examination. It was worth noting, however, that, touching on the Chechen problem, the U.S. President compared the situation in Northern Caucasus with the 1861-1865 Civil War in the United States, during which the number of Americans killed was greater than in all 20th century wars. This treatment differs fundamentally from the official Russian position that the Russian forces in Chechnya are waging a struggle against terrorist gangs. By drawing this comparison, Clinton wittingly or unwittingly...played a dirty trick on B. Yeltsin!

The G-8 could not have kept silent about the tragic events in the Middle East. While the G-7 leaders were gathering in Moscow, more than 100 Lebanese civilians, including old people, women, and children, died not far from the city of Tyre in Lebanon as a result of shelling of a refugee camps by Israeli artillery. The Israeli soldiers were not perturbed even by the fact that the refugee camp was close to a base used by the Fijian battalion of UN forces (UNIFIL), which also suffered losses. The G-8 leaders adopted a special statement demanding an immediate cease-fire from the parties and the solution of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict by political means. The foreign ministers of the United States, France, and Italy — W. Christopher, Herve de Charette, and Susanna Agnelli (who also represents the EU) — were sent to the conflict zone. B. Yeltsin sent Ye. Primakov to the region. All ministers gathered in Damascus 20 April and started intensive diplomatic efforts to seek ways for political settlement. According to news agency reports, there are two plans for the conflict's solution — the French, which is considered pro-Arab, and the pro-Israeli U.S. plan. They are similar insofar as both provide for an immediate cease-fire on the basis of the verbal agreement on nonviolence against the civilian population, reached by the sides in 1993. This agreement must be put down in writing. The difference is that the French plan envisages a second stage, following the cease-fire, to hold talks on implementing UN Security Council resolution No. 425, adopted way back in 1978, on the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory. Of course, Tel Aviv would prefer the Christopher plan. Israel does not wish to pull out of southern Lebanon, but at the same time wants to ensure the safety of inhabitants of northern Israel against shelling by Hizballah's "Katyushas." Hizballah, and its backers Syria and Iran, cannot accept this. Hizballah insists on its right to strike against Israel for as long as it occupies parts of southern Lebanon.

In view of these serious differences, a cease-fire agreement has not been reached in Lebanon to this day, and military operations are continuing for the 12th day running. More than 160 Lebanese civilians have been killed and more than 200 have been injured already as a result of Israel's air strikes. It is worth noting that, despite the rocket fire against northern Israel, losses among the civilian population there are insignificant — just a few people have been injured. This prompts the thought that Hizballah is more accurate in its target selection, striving not to shell civilian targets.

In conclusion, a few words about Russia's role in the settlement of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. The Russia mass media are trying to create the impression that Ye. Primakov's participation in this process guarantees an active role for Russian diplomacy because, in contrast with A. Kozyrev, the new minister enjoys prestige and respect among Arab leaders. The issue, however, concerns not Ye. Primakov personally but the fact that Russia today does not enjoy the trust of Arab countries' leaders, who consider it to be a U.S. satellite. This is perfectly well understood by Washington and it does not deem it necessary to take Moscow's opinion into account. W. Christopher, having arrived in Damascus 20 August [as published] and having held talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, did not even meet with Ye. Primakov before departing for Jerusalem to meet with Israel's Prime Minister Sh. Peres. Ye. Primakov was forced to limit his role to an expression of support for French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette's plan. Meanwhile, Israel is not paying any attention to France's efforts, preferring to deal only with the United States....

Russia: U.S.-Russian Talks on Nuclear Cooperation With Iran Viewed

NC2404062296 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Persian 1500 GMT 23 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] During the past few years, in all the meetings between the heads of Russia and the United States, the latter has expressed its concern over the former's decision to sell nuclear reactors to Iran. Some observers [words indistinct] presumed that this topic would once again emerge in the Moscow talks. They were not wrong.

In the news conference at the end of the Russian-American summit, Bill Clinton did speak about this topic, and he used words that attracted everybody's attention. According to the U.S. President, he continues to oppose Russia's intention to deliver nuclear technology to Iran because Iran is in the process of compiling a nuclear program. But in answer to a question on whether the delivery of reactors to Tehran will harm Russian-American relations, Clinton categorically said: I don't think so. He added: On the whole, [words indistinct] with Russia. The American President added that the (?benefits) of the Moscow talks are much greater than the existing differences of opinion between Russia and America on nuclear [word indistinct] with Iran.

This statement by Bill Clinton was unexpected by many because since March 1995 when the Russian-Iranian agreement was signed, the White House has been striving to put intense pressure on Moscow. [words indistinct] that some representatives of Washington even said that progress in Russian-American relations was linked with Russia's refusal to carry out nuclear cooperation with Iran.

As we know, Moscow was not affected by the pressure. Moreover, as recently stated by the Russian Foreign Ministry, a series of other joint projects on the peaceful use of nuclear energy are to be implemented.

Of course America is aware of all this. Therefore, what has affected the American President's stand? America is probably very well aware of the fact that the construction of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant will not create opportunities for Iran to use nuclear technology for its military purposes. According to Georgiy Kaurov, spokesman for the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry, an atomic bomb cannot be built with some milligrams of [word indistinct] plutonium isotopes in the light-water reactors that are to be delivered to Bushehr—and this is the type of reactors that are to be delivered to Iran. Much larger quantities of this material are needed for this purpose. Therefore, the Russian-Iranian agreement cannot have any military consequences and will not endanger international nuclear security. Needless to say, the entire process of the implementation of this agreement will be under the control of a reliable organization such as the International Atomic Energy Organization.

Nevertheless, there were (?political) [word indistinct] to the reconciliatory statement by the American President during the joint news conference with the Russian president in Moscow. A few days ago the American newspaper THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR cited the Washington spokesman as saying that: We are facing the danger of falling into the impasse of our own [word indistinct]. He added that possible steps to upset this deal could harm other aspects of American-Russian relations and that this was not worth it.

Moscow wants to have excellent relations with Washington. As was shown by the G-8 summit, Russia very categorically demands that the Nonproliferation Treaty be observed, especially near its borders. But this does not mean, in any way, that Russia will refrain from mutually beneficial cooperation with its neighbors, namely in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Russia: Primakov Criticizes U.S. for Acting 'Single-Handedly'

LD2304194196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1737 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Apr 23 (Interfax) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov criticized the USA for its attempts to "act single-handedly in the efforts to settle the crisis on the border between Lebanon and Israel."

"Russia acts (Interfax's note: in the Middle East) more coordinatedly with France, and less with the USA; to a greater extent with the European Union than with the USA, unfortunately," he told a group of journalists in Moscow's Vnukovo-2 Airport upon his return from a tour of the Middle East Monday night.

Nevertheless Primakov said in answer to a question from Interfax that this does not involve differences between Russia and the USA. "It so happened that the USA acted parallelly, not in a pool. This has its positive and negative points," he explained.

"The Russian and American presidents agreed (Interfax's note: in Moscow) on coordinated actions," Primakov said, "and instructed their subordinates accordingly."

The road toward settling the crisis on the Lebanese-Israeli border lies through compliance with Resolution

No.425 on withdrawing Israeli troops from Lebanon, issued by the U.N. security Council, he pointed out. What matters is not only Hizballah, but also the fact that part of Lebanon is under occupation, and this question must be resolved in its essence, Primakov said.

According to him, "it will be possible to lay the entire responsibility on the Lebanese government and on the government of Syria, whose troops are also deployed in Lebanon," only when Israeli troops are withdrawn from Lebanon.

"However no one will bear the entire responsibility for Hizballah's actions till the time, when Israeli troops are removed from Lebanese soil," he said.

Therefore a major goal today is to stop the shellings civilians fall victim to, Primakov said. "I think we gained progress on these issues," he added.

He categorically disagreed with the notion that either Hizballah is destroyed, or Lebanon will continue to be subjected to strikes. "This stand is not well-balanced, not constructive, not paving the way for peace talks or a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis as a whole, which is in a deadlock now," Primakov pointed out.

According to him, "Russia categorically objects to the shelling and bombing of Lebanon by Israel." "However at the same time we object to the missile strikes launched at Israel from Lebanon," he said.

"The strikes hit largely civilian targets," Primakov said. In Lebanon only a few Hizballah fighters died as a result of massive Israeli bombings; the remaining victims are civilians.

"Therefore the physical destruction of Hizballah with the help of such bombings is out of the question," Primakov pointed out.

"Russia continues its mission in the Middle East: Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk remained in the area; he will carry out shuttle trips," he said.

With reference to the situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border as a whole Primakov said "the crisis is very serious, and it blocks further progress on the road toward political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Russia "will do all it can to resolve this crisis, leaning on its long experience and extensive ties, and using its potential and image it built for many years," Primakov said.

Russia "has been and will be present in the Middle East," Primakov pointed out. "We have our interests and responsibilities there, and we shall act in the interests of peace and stability," he said.

According to him, the main thing for Russia is "not political dividends, but the need to gain peace in the area." "We are interested in peace and stability there maybe to an even greater extent than others," Primakov said.

The Middle East accepts Russia and wants it to step up its efforts there, he stressed.

"We are appreciated as cochairman of the Madrid conference. This is particularly noticeable in Arab countries," Primakov said. "Even Israel has no common concept that only one power can do something, and is interested in a constructive role played by Russia."

During his Middle East tour launched on instructions from President Boris Yeltsin Primakov visited Syria, Lebanon and Israel, where he conferred with the leaders of those countries.

In addition he coordinated his efforts with with his French and Italian counterparts, Herve de Charette and Susanna Agnelli, chair of the European Union.

He also conferred with Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and had several telephone conversations with the U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher, Primakov said.

Russia: Primakov Trip Sign of Russia's 'Return' to Near East

MM2304153996 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 7

[Report by Sergey Postanogov under the "Lightning Visit" rubric: "The Minister Is Not a Magician.... But, With His Help, Russia Is Trying To Return to the Near East"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Whereas just a few days ago the Lebanese mass media were going all out to criticize Russia's stance as regards the Israeli bomb raids, the tone of their reports has undergone a sharp change since Primakov's visit.

Primarily because Russia, as a cosponsor of the peace process, has clearly condemned Israel's military operations. During his meetings in Syria, Lebanon, and Israel with these states' leaderships, Primakov decisively advocated a cessation of combat actions. While acting in coordination with other countries, Russia has nonetheless its own specific stance. It is distinguished primarily by the fact that, in parallel with the immediate cessation of combat actions, it clearly notes the need to implement UN Security Council resolution No. 425 which provides for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. The Americans and the French, for example, are treating the implementation of this document as something for the future and this, of course, does not suit the Lebanese Government which is openly describing the Israeli occupation as the prime cause of military actions.

This is what I was told by Yevgeniy Primakov prior to his departure: "Russia intends to significantly galvanize its role in the Near East." He noted that any decision on the cessation of combat actions must be balanced, without any advantages whatsoever for any of the sides involved in the conflict.

Finding a compromise between warring sides is a highly complex matter, and the minister reminded me that he is "not a magician." But there is no doubt about the usefulness of his visit: This trip has inspired hope among many people in the Near East that Russia will return to the region and will play a weighty role here, just as it did in the past.

Russia: Primakov Describes Crisis in Near East as 'Serious'

LD2304132096 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1100 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Despite the efforts of the world community the Lebanese-Israeli conflict is not dying down in the Near East. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov returned late last night from a shuttle tour of Lebanon, Israel, and Syria where he had talks with the leaders of these countries.

[Begin Primakov recording] This concerns the withdrawal of Israeli troops from there. Then, we could shift off the entire responsibility on to the Lebanese leadership and the Syrian leadership. As we know, Syrian troops are also based in Lebanon. Until these [Israeli] troops are withdrawn, no one can really take full responsibility for the Hizballah's actions. This is absolutely clear. [passage omitted]

A few conclusions from what has happened: First, indeed the crisis is serious and it is blocking further progress on the path of political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Second, Russia is doing everything it can to overcome, to solve this crisis. Russia is using its many years of experience, widespread ties which it has, and its image. [end recording]

Russia: Ivanov Offers More Cooperation in Middle East Settlement

LD2304155296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1531 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Denis Perkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Itar-Tass) — The U.S. and Russia are co-sponsors of the Middle East settlement, Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov told a briefing today.

However, Russia is ready to cooperate with other states, including France and the European Union.

He said Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov had met no motivation of U.S. representatives for coordination of settlement efforts.

"It appears the U.S. would like, perhaps in a certain extent, to monopolise at this stage its role where the Middle East settlement is concerned," Ivanov said.

It is no secret that the U.S. is a strategic partner of Israel, and this underlies Israel's recent statements that it pins most of hope on the U.S. in the search for a peaceful settlement, Ivanov continued.

"But this in no way means that Israel is rejecting the co-sponsor role of Russia," he admitted.

Russian Foreign Ministry senior spokesman Grigoriy Karasin, who attended the briefing, quoted Primakov as saying after his Middle East trip that "Russia was, is and will remain in the Middle East, where it will act to interests of peace and stabilisation."

Russia's reconciliatory efforts met special recognition in Syria and Lebanon, Primakov was quoted as saying.

Karasin said the diplomatic efforts had made a stop to violence against Lebanon close.

"Although the situation remains difficult in the region, we hope that the acute situation can be overcome in the nearest time," he said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk is staying in the region for contacts with the parties to the conflict.

Russia: Foreign Ministry Supports Libya's Inspection Offer

LD2304140096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1320 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Dmitriy Zelenin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Itar-Tass) — Russia's Foreign Ministry supports the Libyan initiative to receive a mission of international observers who will inspect a facility under construction near the town of Tarhuna, some 40 miles southeast of Tripoli, which is suspected to be chemical weapons plant.

"We regard this proposal by the Libyan leadership as a positive step in the light of the statements made by certain American officials about an alleged construction of a chemical weapons plant underway in Tarhuna", Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin said on Tuesday.

According to Karasin, this new initiative demonstrates "Tripoli's openness and Libya's readiness for constructive cooperation with the international community."

Russia: 'Countermeasures' Threatened if NATO Expands Into Baltics

WS2304140896 Tallinn BNS in English 1223 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Apr 23, BNS — The Russian ambassador to Finland in an interview to the Finnish Kalevala newspaper Tuesday [23 April] underlined Russia's opposition to NATO's expansion into the Baltic states, threatening to take countermeasures.

"It is understandable the new independent Baltic states want security like all other countries. But we cannot agree with this being motivated by danger from Russia," Ambassador Yuriy Deryabin said in the interview. "In the case of such fears there are other possibilities, for example, the country's own defence force, like that of Finland."

Deryabin said in the interview that if there are fears and suspicions, there is also a system of guarantees with a number of options. The guarantees could be by NATO or by Russia, or by both, he said.

"There can be a number of options, but I underline, accession to a military alliance is not one of them," the Russian ambassador said. "It is obvious that in such a case the need to guarantee Russian security will take priority. Some sort of adequate measures will have to be taken."

"Of course I exclude military operations against those states. But if foreign military bases and nuclear arms appear in the vicinity of our borders, we can only imagine the sort of measures this compels us to take," Deryabin said.

The Russian ambassador warned that the Baltic states' possible accession to NATO would cardinally change the situation in the Baltic Sea area.

Deryabin said in his interview to the Finnish newspaper that he could see no problem in the Baltic and Euorpean states joining the European Union. "The EU has a major role in the economic integration of Europe, and we, too, would like to take part in it," he said.

Russia: Yeltsin's Baltic-Black Sea Nuclear-Free Zone Offer Viewed

MK2304112396 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Article by Russian Presidential National Security Aide Yuriy Baturin: "Nuclear-Free Zone From the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The document "Russia's Stance on Questions of Nuclear Safety," introduced by the Russian president at the Moscow nuclear safety and security meeting on 20 April 1996, speaks about the need to concentrate nuclear arms of the nuclear states exclusively on their own territories. This proposal is yet to be mulled over in the capitals of the other nuclear states. It is obvious, however, that it contains a big potential. It is in tune with the idea for reducing the territory of "nuclear presence" and the many ideas and understandings on ruling out the deployment of nuclear arms in various regions: for example, Africa and Southeast Asia, to say nothing about Latin America or the South Pacific, where nuclear-free zones have long been in existence.

A de-facto nuclear-free zone also took shape in Southern, Central, Eastern (including Ukraine and Belarus), and Northern Europe (Baltic States) after Russia had withdrawn from there its forces and operational-tactical and tactical nuclear arms. Time has come to think about giving it a legal status: in the shape of corresponding commitments by the nuclear powers not to deploy their nuclear arms in these regions.

We could speak about creating a nuclear-free zone from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. This could involve the three Baltic states, for Vyshegrad [as transcribed] Group states, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria.

Thus, this could be a way out of the dead end in the matter of creating a system of European security owing to NATO's plans for eastward expansion. The creation of such a zone could end Russia's worry over the moving of nuclear arms closer to its borders and extend security guarantees to countries in Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Europe.

The idea of a nuclear-free zone from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea is in tune with previous proposals, in particular those made by Sweden for the creation of such a zone in Central Europe under the social democratic government of Olaf Palme. It is in order also to recall the statement of the Belarusian foreign minister made during the conference that examined the operation of the Nonproliferation Treaty in April of 1995 on creating a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, which could be also joined by Belarus and Ukraine.

The creation of a nuclear-free zone from the Baltic to the Black Sea would be in line with Russia's national interests and the interests of all European countries. Such a zone would serve to consolidate the current position, where this region is free of nuclear weaponry, and would provide guarantees that it would not appear there in the future. Of no less importance is the circumstance that security guarantees — both "negative" and "positive" — could be provided to these countries not only by NATO but also by Russia. The zone idea could be supplemented by the provisions of the so-called "German formula" of 12 September 1990, under which there should be neither nuclear weaponry nor its delivery systems on the territory of the ex-GDR.

Given such conditions, of course, the joining of NATO by some countries of Europe could have a purely political nature because they would be provided with NATO guarantees of security without the deployment of nuclear weaponry and its delivery systems.

This would of course call for revising some of NATO's fundamental documents, including the Washington agreement of 1949, and would be in tune with the idea to transform the military alliance into a political system of collective security in Europe. It is precisely for this reason that NATO's functionaries will not be overjoyed at this proposal. It would be difficult to object to it, however.

It would be also virtually impossible for those aspiring for NATO membership to object. It is hard to imagine that the leadership of, for example, the Czech Republic and Poland would insist on having nuclear weapons deployed on their territories. In this case they run the risk of sparking the toughest protest of their peoples, who would not like to become the target of Russian nuclear missiles.

Russia: Police Search for Ex-Azerbaijani Premier, Other Officials

LD2304163096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1212 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Interfax) — Russian police are trying to track down former Azerbaijani Prime Minister Suret Guseynov and other officials wanted by Baku.

The police have an extensive list of former Azerbaijani politicians hiding in Russia who are to be detained and extradited to Azerbaijan, ten of them of fairly high rank, one police official told Interfax.

Asked if Guseynov was really hiding in Moscow, he said "we would have arrested him a long time ago if he were."

Guseynov, who toppled former President Abulfaz Elchibey in an army mutiny in summer 1993, is accused by Baku of a failed coup attempt.

Under the bilateral extradition treaty, former Azerbaijani Defense Chief Ragim Gaziyev, sentenced to death in absentia on charges of treason by Baku, was arrested and deported to Azerbaijan last week.

Ex-President Ayaz Mutalibov, who was detained at the same time, is undergoing treatment at a Moscow hospital for heart complaints. The Russian Prosecutor General's Office is now examining the indictment brought against Mutalibov before deciding whether or not he should be extradited.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Meets With Residents of Khabarovsk

LD2404082296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0350 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khabarovsk, 24 Apr (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin started his working day today with a walk round the streets of Khabarovsk and visits to some of the stores in the city center. The head of state went into a number of grocery stores where he spent a long time talking to customers. The main subjects of the conversations were payment of pensions, the size of pensions, the standard of living of the residents of Khabarovsk, the implementation of "One's Own Home" program, the decree on which was recently signed by the Russian president. In general, prices in Khabarovsk are higher than in Moscow, while the population receives wages similar to those common to the whole of Russia. Boris Yeltsin noted that, no matter what, Russia has now already overcome the most difficult period and is entering the path of economic growth.

Then the president visited the construction site of a new wing of the rail bridge across the Amur river. This bridge, which was built in 1913-1916, is a unique construction. It is currently not just being reconstructed, but a new bridge is being erected along side the one being used at present. Railways Minister Gennadiy Fadeyev noted in an interview with ITAR-TASS that "with the commissioning of this bridge Russia will stand before the ocean on two feet." He said that they tried to reconstruct the bridge back in the seventies, but they were put off by the extent of the construction work, and it was not until 1991-1992 that they found the required sum of 3,100 billion rubles.

Boris Yeltsin talked to the bridge builders for almost a whole hour. They asked him all kinds of questions, including about the news of the death of Dzhokhar Dudayev. The Russian president noted that the information is being checked.

The president laid a wreath at the eternal flame of the memorial to those from the Far East who perished in World War II. While talking to veterans and students who had come to the monument, he touched upon the border problem, including the fate of the three disputed islands which Russia and China have not been able to agree upon for quite a long time now. The veterans asked that Boris Yeltsin should try to keep these islands. The head of state responded by promising to raise the subject during the upcoming talks and to settle the problem in Russia's interests.

Russia: Yeltsin Discusses Election Campaign, Far East Development

LD2304141196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1300 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Anatoliy Vostokov, Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khabarovsk, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Khabarovsk today on his way to China. [passage omitted]

Talking to journalists at the airport, Boris Yeltsin said that his election campaign "has now become quite clear and well-organized." Speaking about his trips around the country, the president said: "The month of May will be very tough — I have 16 trips planned and I will travel around half Russia, at least."

The head of state said that his election campaign is gaining momentum "in the center, in Moscow, and in most localities. There are my agents, headquarters, and committees in support of the president everywhere." "Vigorous work with people is in progress," Boris Yeltsin said. "Visual propaganda has been stepped up and various promotional events are being considered," he remarked.

Touching upon his stop-over in Khabarovsk, Boris Yeltsin said: "I have not been here for a long time. This is a stark and difficult area but, at the same time, a powerful one. There are quite a few problems here. After my last trip I instructed the administrations of Far Eastern territories and regions and the Russian Government to jointly draw up a special program for the economic and social development of the Far Eastern region up to the year 2005. I have brought this program with me in order to discuss it with regional leaders and, provided they do not demand that fundamental amendments be made, the program will be presented and approved." [passage omitted]

Russia: Yeltsin's Itinerary in Khabarovsk Detailed

MK2404100496 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Oleg Kryuchek from Khabarovsk: "An Ordinary Khabarovsk Family Is Getting Ready for a Meeting With Yeltsin. The Kray Authorities Are Going To Acquaint the President With the Whole List of Local Problems"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The program schedule for Boris Yeltsin's stay in Khabarovsk, where he will arrive at about 2300 local time on Tuesday [23 April], has been detailed down to the minute. Immediately after the presidential plane has landed, Mr. Yeltsin will be taken to have a rest; the main work will start on Wednesday [24 April] and will continue until the moment the president leaves for China at 1500 local time. According to Khabarovsk Kray Governor Viktor Ishayev, it will be proposed that Boris Yeltsin visit the construction site of a bridge across the Amur River, a memorial of military glory in the center of Khabarovsk and meet with the youth in one of the high schools. He will also have a meeting with the territorial leaders and with the heads of large industrial enterprises, trade unions, as well as with the public, in the kray administration building. In addition, on the way to the airport, the presidential motorcade will stop for some minutes near a city cemetery, where several years ago a chapel was built in memory of the people who were repressed in Stalin's time, and Yeltsin will be met there by representatives of the local branch of the "Memorial" society.

It is noteworthy that Khabarovsk Kray Governor Viktor Ishayev decided not to convene a meeting of the "Far East and Transbaykal" economic relations association — which includes heads of all Far Eastern territories — on the day the president arrives, as was scheduled. In Mr. Ishayev's words, after all, governors see the president in Moscow often enough, whereas he has not many opportunities to hear about the particular problems of Khabarovsk Kray. Viktor Ishayev also noted that the president, as a candidate for the presidency, would surely use his stay in Khabarovsk for campaign purposes.

The program of Boris Yeltsin's stay also includes an acquaintance with an ordinary Khabarovsk family, but no criteria as to the choice of an ordinary family have been reported as yet. To receive the head of state in a befitting manner, all available municipal services and military units have been mobilized to tidy up streets, to paint fences, and to resurface roads with asphalt. The press service of the administration is working hard to sort out the local journalists carefully. The administration told them to be content with being able to behold the president briefly during one of his stops on the route, since, on his visit to Khabarovsk and China, Mr. Yeltsin is accompanied by some 50 Moscow journalists, who will take upon themselves the main burden of responsibility for a comprehensive and objective coverage of the president's stay in the Far East.

Russia: Yeltsin Signs Edict on Development of Far East, Baykal Region

LD2404090096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0753 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By Anatoliy Vostokov, Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHABAROVSK, April 24 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree in Khabarovsk today, giving a presidential status to the federal programme of economic and social development of the Russian Far East and the Baykal region until the year 2005.

A decision to raise the status of the Far East was adopted taking into account an important role played by the Russian Far East and the Baykal region in Russia's social and economic revival and their geopolitical situation in the dynamically developing Asian-Pacific region, the decree said. The federal programme of the socio-economic development of the Far East and the Baykal region for 1996-2005 was endorsed by the Russian government on April 15, 1996.

Yeltsin also signed a decree "On additional measures for the rehabilitation of victims of political repressions." The document stipulates that appeals for rehabilitation made by citizens who in childhood stayed with their parents in detention centers or were in exile or compounds for resettled people will be considered in a period of time stipulated by the Russian law "On rehabilitation of victims of political repressions."

The government of the Russian Federation was instructed to look into the problem of allocating additional funds needed for the realization of this law and the above mentioned decree and also submit proposals on amendments and addenda to the federal legislature.

Russia: Yeltsin Edict Helps Farmers; Duma Retaliates

MM2304142196 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 3

[Article by Yelena Ishkova: "Reforms in the Countryside: One Step Forward by the President, Two Steps Back by the Duma"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although there is no such thing as an easy spring day in the countryside, nevertheless this sowing season has started on an optimistic note for rural inhabitants. The measures taken by the president to supply the countryside, including by commodity credits, have been supplemented by the extremely topical Russian Federation Presidential Edict "On Measures To Stabilize the Economic Situation and Develop Reforms in the Agro-Industrial Complex."

Suffice it to say that this edict has eased the burden of payments on the crippling centralized credits issued in 1992-1994. The debts owed on these will now be rescheduled to as far ahead as 2005. Payments for last year's commodity credits are also being extended to 1998. The Pension Fund and the compulsory medical insurance, employment, and social insurance funds will not take a penny from indebted agricultural producers. And electricity for production needs will be half-price for agricultural enterprises. Irrespective of their form of ownership, all farms — be they a collective farm untouched by the reforms or an association of private farms, where land and property have been privatized — have been looked at by the president.

The luckiest ones, nevertheless, or those in the vanguard of the reforms in the countryside — the private farmers. Judging by the edict, they are becoming the favorites of the president and the government. Recently, immediately after this edict was signed, the private farmers organization AKKOR [Association of Russian Peasant (Private) Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives] and the Union of Landowners held a joint meeting and stated that they will support Boris Yeltsin at the June elections.

The president has set the task of formulating a federal program (followed by regional ones) to support private farming by 1 August this year. The point is to provide farmers with equipment, if not at the level of collective and state farms, at least at the rate of one plowing tractor per 100 hectares and one grain harvesting combine and one truck per 150 hectares of grain crops. Nowadays, without even having the pool of equipment available to collective farms, private farmers are solidly outperforming them in terms of yields, profitability, and prevention of after-harvesting crop loss. Together with personal plots they produced more than half of Russia's gross food output in 1995. It is time to strengthen their material infrastructure. It will also be developed through the use of machine-tractor stations. The land tax deferment granted to private farmers by the law will be extended to more than five years from the moment they create a farm.

Yet another chronic "pain" — the absurd system of taxation for private farmers — has not been forgotten either. Sometimes, peasants joke, a ton of potatoes accounts for a ton of paper. The president has told organs of power that, within the limits of their powers, they should simplify private farm record keeping and abolish or reduce taxes for the first and most difficult part of their existence. And to put an end to the phenomenon of private farmers having too little land (a farm in our country averages slightly more than 40 hectares, whereas the figure in Germany is around 100), the president has decreed that since one-man farms do not yet have the resources to expand their holdings by buying parcels of land, 800 billion rubles is to be channeled into funding credit for private farmers and other agricultural producers to buy land.

The president proposes that next year at the latest there should be a return to soft loans for agricultural producers — albeit at 25 percent annual interest — so long as they cannot afford market rates. A special federal fund will be created. The president intends to resolutely remove an old yoke from agricultural producers' shoulders. I am referring to the social sphere. Hitherto the process of transferring housing, garden plots, and the like to local administrations' budgets has been sluggish. By his decree the president has set a specific date by which the handover must be finally completed — 1 January 1997. Facilities which have not been transferred will have to be maintained by the local authorities in conjunction with the agricultural enterprises.

Realizing the extent to which this step by the president toward resolving chronic rural problems could boost his rating among the peasants, and particularly the private farmers, who have long been playing the role of a catalyst of reform in the countryside now, the Communists and Agrarians expedited the adoption of the Land Code. The anti-market draft was approved by a majority of votes on its second reading literally the day after the presidential edict was signed. AKKOR and the Russian Union of Landowners have requested Boris Yeltsin not to sign this document since it curtails the constitutional rights of private landowners. Under the adopted draft, areas of land designated for agricultural purposes cannot be sold, bought, or mortgaged. Such market operations are allowed only for gardens, dacha plots, and personal plots. The transfer of land shares is terminated. They cannot be gifted, sold, or bequeathed. This is a colossal blow to owners of land shares, particularly for pensioners whose land share is a means of survival.

"The Communists, who voted unanimously for the draft, are contradicting their own program," was State Duma deputy and AKKOR President Vladimir Basmachnikov's comment on this event. "In their program they advocate that land should belong to those who work it. But thanks to this version of the Land Code it will belong to the collective farm generals. Because a land share will only be transferable to the incorporation capital of the joint-stock company — that is, the collective farm."

Today Samara farmer Matveyev leases land shares from his fellow villagers and nobody calls him a landowner. Everyone only thanks him. For conscientiously paying a substantial leasing payment and using the leased areas in a way the local collective farm should learn from.

But the directors and chairmen don't like this. The people articulating their interests in the Duma — the Communists, Agrarians, and Zhirinovskiy supporters (it was by their votes that the Land Code was adopted) — are undoubtedly hoping to win the deracinated rural electorate over to their side in the course of the presidential elections. The high-speed adoption of the Code is a pre-election game. The Russian president will not sign such a version of this document, which contradicts the Constitution, Vice Premier Aleksandr Zaveryukha assured us. The other rural voters — owners and proprietors — are getting to stand on their own feet and are increasing in number.

Russia: Zyuganov Approves Results of Moscow Nuclear Summit

LD2304145096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1212 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Interfax) — Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov approved of the recent summit on nuclear safety.

"The planet is obviously overloaded with radioactive materials, and their spread is fraught with deadly danger for mankind," he told a Tuesday press conference, adding that "attempts to take radioactive waste out of Russia will be strengthened."

"The irresponsibility that has seeped into all pores of Russian society has worked its way into the nuclear safety sphere as well," he said.

As for the decision on Chernobyl's future, "that is wholly Ukraine's, and should be well thought-out, as it will need enormous financial expenditures," Zyuganov said, adding that "even bodies of Chernobyl victims buried not at two but at six meters continue to emit death."

Zyuganov expressed skepticism toward polls showing rises in President Boris Yeltsin's rating. "The democrats' [rating] always rises sharply on the eve of the elections, but after the elections, for some reason, it always falls by the same amount," he said.

In answer to an Interfax question on Yeltsin's declaration that he is confident of victory, Zyuganov said "it is the people who should have confidence above all, but unfortunately, they have lost it." Zyuganov promised that if he were elected, he would be guided not by the Communist Party program, but by his pre-election program, which was "formed by a wide coalition."

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Discusses Unity Treaty, Elections, Arms Sales

WS2304143196 Minsk VO SLAVU RODINY in 18 Apr 96 p 5

[Interview with Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, head of the Russian Liberal-Democratic Party, LDPR, by Lieutenant Mikalay Lyawchuk, in Moscow; date not given: "'Lukashenka Showed Himself as a Creator'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Judging by press reports, it has been a long time since we last heard about Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's antics. Recently, he has been sheer calm and reasonableness. This is exactly the impression that the LDPR leader made on a group of Belarusian journalists he recently met at the headquarters of the party's faction in the Russian State Duma. Truth be told, he got "carried away" during the conversation now and then, which reminded of his ability to think in an eccentric and untypical way. In terms of cultivating his own image, this speaks well of him, unless he indulges in militarist calls. And maybe his current calm is just the calm before the storm of presidential elections? In any case, many people are now holding their breath, waiting for something fresh in the Zhirinovskiy repertoire. Some even say that Deputy Gleb Yakunin, after the known incident in the State Duma, riveted the cross to his cassock.... [not further explained] This is why it is natural that the first questions asked by the journalists were about the hottest issue — the Belarusian-Russian accords.

[Lyawchuk] **Some time ago, you said that Belarus should become Russia's northwestern oblast. It would be interesting to know what role you see for it in the new Community?**

[Zhirinovskiy] A new territorial division is not at issue. In the long-run, we may have an East European community, that is, when all Slavs unite. After that, one could design common symbols.

[Lyawchuk] **In this case, you will have new rivals in the presidential elections....**

[Zhirinovskiy] I would not like the situation to become more strained. Lukashenka, for example, made wonderful steps toward Russia, initiating the process of integration. His name will be historically important. While Shushkevich proved to be a destroyer, Lukashenka showed himself as a creator. Belarus sort of compensated for what happened in Belovezhskaya Pushcha. So, under certain circumstances, Alyaksandr Lukashenka could become a very serious rival in the elections.

The 2 April celebration in the Kremlin was beautiful also because two nations agreed, without soldiers and shooting, on how they should live. It may not be a single state yet, but it is no longer the CIS or the USSR. This is a new step toward unification of states. This is why I feel sympathetic toward Alyaksandr Ryhoravich [Lukashenka] on all things.

[Lyawchuk] **What do you think about cooperation between our two armies, especially in light of the Chechen problem, which is so acute in Russia?**

[Zhirinovskiy] I think that after 16 June, we will get done with Chechnya finally and irreversibly. I am sure that at least before the presidential elections, no moves will be made to merge the two armies.... In my opinion, no one would object if the troops had a training ground where they could exercise and, as it were, sniff some powder. It would do good to any army. The American Army, for example, participates almost in all armed conflicts throughout the world.

[Lyawchuk] **But we have conversion, with our tanks being cut apart...**

[Zhirinovskiy] Nothing should be cut. Everything should be sold. Show your business flair, paint them in a different color, change their [identification] numbers, and sell them.

[Lyawchuk] **Whom are we supposed to sell them to? Maybe to Iraq, where the LDPB [Liberal-Democratic Party of Belarus] leader, Syarhey Haydukevich, and you paid visits recently?**

[Zhirinovskiy] Iraq would be willing to buy, but it is difficult for that country to pay now. Your clients are much closer; you could sell armored vehicles and weapons to Finland. One could conduct active policies, selling to both sides.

[Lyawchuk] **Where did your impulsiveness go lately?**

[Zhirinovskiy] The terrible period when everything was crumbling has ended. The time has now come to cast the stones away, so I feel calmer. In addition, I see that my chief adversaries, communists and democrats, are becoming weaker.

[Lyawchuk] **Who do you think they will vote for in the presidential elections: for a beloved party or beloved Zhirinovskiy?**

[Zhirinovskiy] They will vote for a specific individual. Voters do not care how their party is called, because any party is created to fit someone's name. For example, you cannot call Alyaksandr Lukashenka an abstract name of the "Belarusian president," because he represents a name in the first place.

[Lyawchuk] **Now, several personal questions. Who is your favorite politician in world history?**

[Zhirinovskiy] Bismarck, who united German lands by iron and blood. And Stolypin, the czarist [agriculture] minister — an assassin's bullet prevented him from finishing the land reform. Ideologically, we are closest to the great Russian philosopher Ilyin. [not further identified]

[Lyawchuk] **What country impressed you most of all?**

[Zhirinovskiy] I do not like foreign countries. It is all rubbish... food, culture, people, and the way of life.

[Lyawchuk] **In other words, the "spit at the West" [name of Zhirinovskiy's book] is quite justifiable?**

[Zhirinovskiy] One should not blindly borrow their values. A lot of things there are phony. We have more achievements in terms of spirituality, and they should envy us. I feel most comfortable in my homeland, and the nicest people are here.

Russia: Officials Told To Answer 'Hot-Line' Calls in Person

MM2304155096 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Vasiliy Kononenko: "Viktor Chernomyrdin Has Told Officials To Answer Calls Personally"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A move in the direction of common sense — this is how it is possible to describe the directive from Head of Government V. Chernomyrdin whereby he charges officials with responding to telephone calls made over the government communications network. This document stipulates that it is permitted to transfer "hot lines" to reception, i.e. to secretaries, only if the subscriber is temporarily absent.

In recent years the owners of "hot lines" — ATS-1 [Automatic Telephone Exchange] and ATS-2 — had themselves rendered this protected communications system ineffective. The receiver is invariably lifted by secretaries, whose chief official duty, as practice shows, is now that of protecting the chief from outsiders, not to mention journalists.

Top-ranking state officials found a way round the situation. They provided themselves with super-protected sets marked "SK" — which is intended to indicate "Kremlin link." But the number of subscribers to this network quickly increased to 100, so then the Federal Government Communications and Information Agency received a new order to create a very restricted communications system — only for the chosen few. Soon an apparatus appeared in the offices of top leaders and presidential aides, which they called the "balalaika." The instructions for it state that secretaries are forbidden to lift the receiver even if the "boss" is not in the room. Originally there were 24 "chosen" officials. But this closed telephone network is not capable of ensuring the running of the state. Therefore the premier was obliged to issue the directive, which puts a stop to bad habits among officials.

Russia: Communists Eye Government Posts, Decision-Making

LD2304142296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1358 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Natalya Panshina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (Itar-Tass) — Leaders of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the popular patriotic bloc are developing a programme for "a government of popular trust," communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov said at a press conference today.

Zyuganov said the government should be formed immediately after the June presidential election. Communists and "popular patriotic forces" are now busy drafting "methods which could ensure a normal handing over of power in the country," Zyuganov said.

This will be a coalition government, Zyuganov said, adding that forming it he will be guided not by the Communist Party's programme but by the platform of a broad popular bloc which had been endorsed by the party's conference.

Communists are in negotiations with "all who want stability in the country to keep up" and believe in ideas of statehood and patriotism, Zyuganov said.

Asked whether ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy was a party to the negotiations about cooperation in the second round of the presidential election, Zyuganov denied this, saying that he prefers "clear and explicit politicians."

Zyuganov said the economic policy of the future government had been discussed, among others, with Sergey Glazyev, the leader of the National Committee of the Democratic Party of Russia.

Without laying out the policy, Zyuganov said the Agrarian Party's programme was likely to make a bulk of the future agrarian policy.

Zyuganov said "retention of all forms of ownership, a sufficiently broad freedom with support the state" is his creed where agricultural producers are concerned.

Russia's foreign policy is also being "drafted," Zyuganov said. He promised that the nearest meeting of the popular patriotic bloc's council would introduce the policy to the public.

Media Issues

Russia: Yegorov Speech at Launch of News Agency

MM2904101796 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI ("Political Wednesday" section) in Russian 24 Apr 96 p iii

[Report by Nikita Vaynonen: "Regional Press Given Access to Information on the Authorities' Activity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There were 1,078 television and radio broadcasting licenses issued in Russia by mid-March 1996. By today, according to reports from the All-Russia Television and Radio Broadcasting Service, this number is already approaching 1,100. It is, however, paradoxical: The number of broadcasters has increased mainly thanks to local television and radio broadcasting companies — private, rather than state-owned, moreover — and now we have 10 nonstate channels for every state-owned one, while the population of Russia, excluding the capitals and major cities, is tuning in primarily to local airwaves. This abnormality should be put right by the Regional Press Agency, which has been set up through the efforts of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff on the initiative of journalists from Federation components, and mainly by its Information Administration. This a truly unprecedented step: The regional press is given direct access to information about the activity of central authorities, and it will be possible to acquire such information not only from documentary sources but also first-hand from the top officers of state, ministers, eminent politicians and scientists, program drafters, and so on.

Addressing local journalists at the agency's launch, Nikolay Yegorov, head of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff, emphasized that the current orientation of political life in its entirety toward the forthcoming presidential election is a new and unusual phenomenon for Russia. For the first time in its entire history, the country will be freely electing the head of state. In Soviet times it was said that we had elections but no choice. Now the situation is diametrically opposite. This will not be a choice between individuals. It has so happened that the coming to power of a leader who will head the state is linked with the choice of a social and economic system. It has so happened that, on the threshold of the third millennium, Russia is again facing the choice: To be or not to be.

Enjoying a tremendous potential, N. Yegorov said, our country has embarked on radical economic and political transformations. A considerable part of the distance has already been covered. Of course, mistakes and costs were unavoidable. But the revision of the present course would have been impossible without practical experience. Such revisions are now being introduced on the basis of this experience. The 1996 course of reforms was laid down in the Russian Federation president's annual message to the Federal Assembly. The president also spoke about this during his trips to Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Belgorod, Krasnodar, and Stavropol, so there is no need to repeat it. But I would like to emphasize, N. Yegorov went on, that unfortunately the activity of the president as head of state is covered by the mass media in a very fragmentary and restricted manner. I do not believe, he said, that journalists are to blame for this. This is a kind of appraisal of the authorities' activity — we ourselves are still not open enough to the press, especially the local press. Without knowing how policy is formulated at the center, it is hard to shape competent public opinion in the regions and — to put it without any exaggeration — Russia's future depends on this today.

What would a return to the past mean now? Recalling his past work in Krasnodar, N. Yegorov spoke of the way this sugar-producing region had to share out its meager sugar ration, distributing it tonne by tonne among rayons, and counting virtually every single packet of "Prima" cigarettes.... It was hard to overcome all this. If the Communists were to gain victory tomorrow, it would mean more than just shortages. We will find ourselves once more in the vicious circle of alienation, only this time it will be even tougher. It will require the buildup of military muscle, and this can be achieved only at the people's expense.

In the prevailing situation a sizable proportion of the population has a chance to compare things as they used to be and as they are now and, depending on this, to determine its stance. The majority realize intuitively that a return to the past cannot be allowed. But we are not offering any food for thought, there is no serious analytical material. I recall how plenums of the Krasnodar Oblast CPSU Committee used to set tasks regarding the commissioning of housing — and the press gave them all-out coverage. And yet, has anyone reported that 1.6 million square meters of housing were commissioned by the end of 1995? And this was done without any plenums. Or that new plants are being built instead of existing ones closing down?

To correct any distortions dictated by political considerations, to help the mass media produce a proper coverage of Russian reality — these will be the objectives of the Regional Press Agency. Its second, and equally important, task will be to promote information exchanges between the center and the regions, to bring them closer together, and to ensure mutual understanding between them. N. Yegorov was specifically asked when a presidential representative will be appointed to one of the regions. The answer was detailed and extensive: The institution of plenipotentiary representatives of the president will have to be reinforced in today's conditions. When regional and local authorities are finally formed on an elected basis, this institution will acquire a new role: To uphold at local level the interests of the Federation, in other words of Russia as a whole, on the basis of coordinating the policy of the components and the center.

For example, it is incorrect to believe that the money allocated from the budget to restore normal life in Chechnya goes to help only this republic. Its energy and oil refining complexes and its railroads work for all of Russia. And the population of the entire country, not just of Chechnya, ought to know that funds are being channeled there in our common interests.

N. Yegorov expressed his firm belief that B. Yeltsin will gain victory at the election.

Military & Space Issues

Russia: Army To Support Yeltsin 'Only If He Acts Within the Law'

MM2304142096 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Interview with Eduard Vorobyev, member of the Duma Defense Committee, by Valeriy Vyzhutovich; place and date not given: "Eduard Vorobyev: Is the Defense Minister Looking For a New Boss?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Through his sensational statements disagreeing with the president's plan for a peace settlement in Chechnya, the defense minister has essentially placed himself in opposition to the supreme commander in chief. A member of the Duma Defense Committee discussed the effect Pavel Grachev's behavior could have on military units and subunits, and what the mood is in the Army on the eve of the election.

[Vorobyev] Pavel Grachev's statements disagreeing with the president's plan for a peace settlement in Chechnya have been interpreted quite definitely by the Army — on the eve of the election the defense minister is looking for a new boss. His speech in the State Duma was an attempt to win opposition support.

[Vyzhutovich] In that event how might the Army vote?

[Vorobyev] Judging by their mood, servicemen are dividing their sympathies between three candidates — Yeltsin, Zyuganov, and Zhirinovskiy. But the Liberal

Democratic Party of Russia leader is unlikely to get as many Army votes as he did at the first Duma elections. His influence on the officers and men has weakened notably.

[Vyzhutovich] To what extent have the president's positions in the Army strengthened?

[Vorobyev] Boris Yeltsin is the supreme commander in chief — and that says it all. The fact that no commander can order his subordinates to vote for a certain candidate is another matter. During his election campaign the president will probably visit some military unit. But Boris Yeltsin needs some strong arguments when it comes to talking to the Army — a peaceful settlement of the Chechnya conflict, military reform, the resolution of the social and domestic problems of the officer corps, and the optimum funding package for the Armed Forces.

[Vyzhutovich] If a situation similar to that of October 1993 were to arise, how would the Army behave?

[Vorobyev] The Army will support the president only if he acts within the law. Otherwise he should not count on loyalty from the military.

Russia: Duma Speaker Confirms Grachev's Resignation in One Month

LD2304191196 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In connection with the latest events in Chechnya, the issue of possible political reshuffles on the Russian Olympus is again being actively discussed. Our radio station has learned from well-informed sources that the resignation of Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev is expected in a month's time. Two candidates are now being considered to replace him. They are Boris Gromov, former deputy defense minister, and Andrey Nikolayev, commander in chief of the border troops. Unfortunately, we have not managed to get in touch with them yet.

As to the possible Grachev's resignation, State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev confirmed it in an interview with our radio station. He connects this with the recent attack on the Russian convoy in Chechnya and a large number of casualties.

[begin Seleznev recording] The operation for the movement of this convoy was a total failure. They got themselves, so to speak, into the ravine knowing it would be easy to fire upon them there at close range. They probably simply relaxed and forgot that a real war is going on. [end recording]

Russia: Chernomyrdin Deplores Lack of Publicity for Army

LD2304220096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1612 GMT 23 Apr 96

[by ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — "The army should not be dragged in when the integrity of Russia is in question." This was stated today by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin at a meeting in Government House with the council of the Russian center for legal Aid to war veterans and invalids. He said that "it is not the army's business to take part in conflicts like the one which has arisen on the territory of the Chechen republic." Unfortunately the mass media carry very few accounts of the points of view of the army and the veterans' organizations about the Russian army. "Representatives of the Defense Ministry have become toothless, they have ceased to defend themselves and they say very little in the mass media and, primarily, on television about their actions, about their life and the life of the army," the head of government stressed.

Russia: Spring Draft Proceeding Under 'Very Difficult Conditions'

MM2304140596 Moscow TRUD in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by TRUD military observer Samail Temirbiyev: "Spring Draft"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The latest draft to the Army is proceeding in very difficult conditions: Economic disorder, a complex political situation, and "hot spots," the main one being Chechnya. All this has an effect on the mood of the draftees and their families and friends, and it raises a multitude of questions.

In spring of this year, 200,000 men are to be drafted to the Army. In all, 65 percent of these will be drafted to the Armed Forces, and the rest to the Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Troops, the Railroad Troops, the Federal Government Communications and Information Agency, and the Federal Border Service.... Period of service — two years. Only men on contract will serve in the "hot spots." According to information I received from the General Staff, 15 percent of draftees are not fit for service for health reasons, another 15 percent have received a one-year deferment for treatment. These figures cannot but generate concern: One draftee in three does not meet the requirements set by the medical commission.

The following facts also make you think. A total of 27 percent of servicemen in the fall draft were brought up either without parents altogether or in single-parent families. One in four had been arrested by the police, and 8 percent of these — more than once. Whereas in 1990 6 percent of draftees had "been through" drugs and substance abuse, the figure is now 15 percent. The figures scream at you.

In 1995 there were 30,000 "dodgers" in the Army — that is, those who tried to avoid service on one pretext or another. In all 59 men were convicted, and criminal proceedings were instituted against 114.

Incidentally, the Moscow Government has examined the question of increasing the administrative liability of individuals who try to dodge military service. The relevant draft law is now at the City Duma. It envisages the sharp tightening up of fines imposed on "dodgers": Whereas before the fines did not exceed one-half of the minimum wage, once the law is adopted they will be equivalent to between 10 and 50 minimum wages.

Russia: Proton Rocket To Put Last Mir Station Component Into Orbit

LD2304132696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1250 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Veronika Romanenkova]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — A Russian Proton heavy booster rocket blasted off successfully today at 1548 Moscow time [1148 GMT] from launch pad 81 at the Baykonur space facility. It is to put into orbit the new research module Priroda [Nature], which will be the final component of the Mir space station. ITAR-TASS correspondents were told this at the press center of the Military Space Forces of the Russian Federation. [Moscow ITAR-TASS in English at 1256 GMT, in an item by Veronika Romanenkova and datelined Moscow, adds the following: "The Priroda module which will dock to the Mir station on April 26, will be the last component of the Russian orbital complex. The main unit of the Mir station started working in space a decade ago. Four modules — Kristall, Kvant, Kvant-2 and Spektr — were attached to it during these years. "The space construction project" will be completed soon. Priroda is packed with great quantities of Russian-made instrumentation: optical systems for investigations of the Earth's natural resources. They will be used even by the present inhabitants of Mir, Russian cosmonauts Yuriy Onufrienko and Yuriy Usachev. The new module carries also a cargo for the third crew member, U.S. woman astronaut Shennon Lucid. NASA sent scientific equipment for her.

["The Russian side hurried with the launching of Priroda precisely due to the American research programme which should be carried out by Lucid. The lift-off was initially scheduled for April 26. It was also decided 'to accelerate' the docking with the station. New modules were usually 'to tether' to Mir on the ninth day after the blast-off. It is now planned to carry out this operation in three days. The Priroda was successfully placed in near earth orbit and is to dock with the Mir on Friday afternoon.]

Federal Assembly

Russia: Upper House Notes 'Extremely Unsatisfactory' Budget Figures

MM2304152396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5

[Unattributed report under the "In the Federation Council" rubric: "Budget Deficit's Dangerous Consequences" — from the "Documents" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] Having heard and discussed the Russian Federation Government's report "On Progress in the Implementation of the Federal Law 'On the 1996 Federal Budget,'" the Federation Council has adopted a decree noting that the situation as regards the budget's implementation is extremely unsatisfactory. The federal budget's tax revenues during the first quarter of the current year amounted to only 56 percent of the planned figure. Federal budget expenditures have been financed only to the 71 percent level, including 59 percent for the national economy, and 66 percent for social and cultural measures. The budget deficit has increased by a factor of 1.5.

The budgetary policy pursued in the country is not geared to using the methods of state incentives for the development of society's productive potential. The absence of coordination in the work of tax, customs, and financial organs in forming the revenue section of budgets at all levels is having a negative effect. One of the reasons for the increase of nonpayments into the federal budget is the breach of payments discipline by individual enterprises and organizations. Mechanisms for uniform state financial monitoring by the organs of executive power to increase the revenue base of budgets at all levels have not been legislatively enshrined. There is no proper monitoring of the targeted utilization of budget funds.

The flaws in the budget process and direct breaches of current procedures for the formation and utilization of budgetary funds are exacerbating social tension in individual regions and in a series of national economic sectors.

The Federation Council has drawn the Russian Government's attention to the extremely unsatisfactory implementation of the federal law "On the 1996 Federal Budget" and to the considerable delay in submitting to the State Duma the quarterly distribution of 1996 budget revenues and expenditures, the list of federal targeted programs, and the distribution of appropriations for the maintenance of the Armed Forces. The government has been instructed to take urgent measures to ensure the implementation of the federal budget's revenue section. The Ministry of Finance has been requested to submit a schedule for the repayment of debts relating to transfers of financial support for Russian components from the Federal Fund, bring order to the system for the federal budget's implementation in cash terms, and impose tight controls over the targeted utilization of budgetary funds.

Russia: Grachev Answers Deputies on Chechnya Ambush

MM2404090396 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 24 Apr 96 pp 1, iii

[Unattributed report: "Grachev in the Duma: Conjectures and Documentary Evidence" — Report begins on page 1 and continues on page iii of "Political Wednesday" section]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's name is once again the focus of sensationalist reporting. This was prompted by his 19 April speech to State Duma deputies during the debate on the tragic events near the village of Yaryshmarda in Chechnya — the ambush and shooting of a convoy of federal forces by Dudayevites.

Commenting on Pavel Grachev's speech at the State Duma, Yevgeniy Kiselev, anchorman of NTV's "Itogi" program, described it in his Sunday [21 April] statement as "prompting legitimate doubts about the defense minister's loyalty to his supreme commander in chief." Some other mass media have made statements along similar lines.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI has decided to let the documentary evidence speak for itself. We are publishing fragments from the conversation which took place at the Duma between the legislators and Russia's defense minister. Readers can draw their own conclusions. [passage omitted]

Oleg Morozov: I have the following question to ask.... Being a nonmilitary person, I fail to understand this: How did it happen that a convoy was ambushed by 200 gunmen? After all, we are talking about 200 men, not just three or five, that is a very large group! No surveillance at all. My specific question is: Does the blame for each specific incident rest with specific third-rate — if you would pardon the expression — majors and colonels? Or should we be looking from a completely different angle at everything that is happening in Chechnya, at the military aspects of operations?

Pavel Grachev: I do not wish to say that the majors, colonels, and other people directly in charge of combat actions are third-rate. As a rule, they are good commanders who have gained experience in Afghanistan and have been fighting in Chechnya for many months already. But the opposite side is not sitting on its hands, either. The Dudayevites even enjoy a certain advantage as regards, for example, their local knowledge. This is quite important, because this is war.

To continue. It is not a particularly difficult task to deploy 200 men on both sides of a ravine within firearm sniping range. This is what we call "ambush action." Once again, the bandits used the local terrain, they used enough greenery for camouflage, as well as the fact that the aviation was grounded at the airfield. **One of the command's mistakes was the fact that there were no helicopters overflying the convoy's route, but if they had done so this would have been a troops operation.** The military know this. There are also other reasons for the poor organization of collaboration between the commanders of the two regiments which resulted in such losses.

Russia: Duma Drafting Decision on Amnesty for Chechen Detachments

LD2304142496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1212 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 23 (ITAR-TASS) — The State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) is now drafting a decision on amnesty to participants in Chechen illegal armed detachments, provided for by the plan of the Russian leadership on a peaceful settlement in Chechnya, Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev told reporters here on Tuesday.

He specified that amnesty will be granted only to gunmen "who are not terrorists and did not commit grave crimes".

Seleznev also noted that the Duma intends to debate the Russian president's peace initiatives on Chechnya in May, since there are no mechanisms now how this will be done.

It is not clear either who will speak at the Duma: premier Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev or any member of the State

Commission on a peaceful settlement in Chechnya, Seleznev concluded.

Russia: Legislative, Regulatory Documents 14-20 Apr

96P50073A

[FBIS Report] The following is a listing of Russian legislation recently published in the press of the Russian Federation compiled by FBIS. Numbers within parentheses indicate approximate wordage. Entries followed by the notation "Text" have been translated into English and are available in FBIS publications.

SECTION I: ECONOMIC LEGISLATION (EXPORT-IMPORT, BANKING, PRIVATIZATION, AUCTIONS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

Federation Council 19 March Resolution On Urgent Steps To Ensure 'Food Security,' Judging Government Action Inadequate (900) Plus Aleksandr Gavrilyuk Commentary (750). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 6)

Government 21 March Decree No. 312 On Construction Of Temporary Pipeline Through Zabaykalsk-Manchuria Crossing Point On Russian-Chinese Border. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (300) (Text)

Government 21 March Directive No. 422 Ratifying Domestic 'Interregional' Loan For 'Innovation' Projects. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 6) (150)

Government 21 March Directive No. 426 Allocating R550 Million To Economy Ministry For Further Work On Program For Far East's Long-Term Development. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Government 22 March Decree No. 324 Approving Comprehensive Plan (Not Published) Of Government Measures To Implement Yeltsin State Of The Nation Message Instructions On Economic Reform, Plus Aleksandr Linkov Commentary Outlining Plan's Main Provisions. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (350/700) (Text)

Government 23 March Decree No. 336 On Privatization Of Moselektrofolga Joint-Stock Company. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (300)

Government 23 March Directive No. 445 Empowering Finance Ministry To Guarantee Agroprombank Loans To Stockbreeding Farms. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Government 23 March Directive No. 447 On Declassification Of Information About Dukatskoye Gold And Silver Deposit. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (200)

Government 23 March Directive No. 457 Empowering Finance Ministry To Guarantee Commercial Bank Loans To Ministry Of Transport. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (250)

Government 25 March Directive No. 472 On Liquidating Lipetsk Aircraft Repair Plant. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Government 1 April Decree No. 357 Ruling Government Decree No. 1089 Of 5 November 1995 On Urgent Measures To Stabilize Power Supplies Partially Lapsed. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (100)

Government 1 April Decree No. 358 On Questions Concerning Federal Service For Regulating Natural Monopolies In Transportation. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (400)

Government 1 April Directive No. 497 Approving Draft Statute On Federal Public-State Fund For Protecting Depositors', Shareholders' Rights. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (300)

Government 3 April Decree No. 372 On Russia's Adherence To International Convention On Harmonized System For Description And Coding Of Goods. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Government 3 April Decree No. 382 Including V.B. Bezrukov In Commission For Economic Reforms, Amending Commission's Statute. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (250)

Government 3 April Directive No. 523 Allocating Rosleskhoz R100 Billion For Forest Fire Prevention. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (150)

Government 3 April Directive No. 528 On Repairs And Maintenance Work Of Krasnodar Water Reservoir And Kray's Land Reclamation Systems. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (600)

Government 3 April Directive No. 535 Empowering Ministry Of Finance To Guarantee Stolichnyy Bank Loan To Republic Of Adyge. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (100)

Government 3 April Directives Nos. 538, 539, And 540 Empowering Finance Ministry To Guarantee Menatep Bank Loan To Pskov Oblast; United Export-Import Bank Loan To Mordovia Government; And Vozrozhdeniye Bank Loan To Mordovia. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (150/150/150)

Government 3 April Directive No. 550 On Compensating Potato Growers For Chernobyl Damage. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (100)

Yeltsin 4 April Edict No. 491 On Priority Measures For State Support For Small Business. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (1200) (Text) (964E1069)

Government 6 April Decree No. 408 Setting Quotas For Mineral Fertilizer Exports In 1996. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (250) (Text)

Yeltsin 9 April Edict No. 510 On Investment Tax Credit To Sverdlovsk Oblast Defense Sector Enterprises. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (300) (Text)

Government 11 April Decree No. 414 On 1996-1998 Exemption From Import Duties Of Various Products Used In Producing Mass Media, Books, Plus List Of Products Affected. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 3) (600/1200)

Yeltsin 12 April Directive No. 182 Including L.Yu. Roketskiy, A.A. Surikov, And K.A. Titov In Interim Working Group For Preparation Of Draft Laws Aimed At Improving Russia's Taxation System. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (200)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 537 On State Support For Reequipping Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Combine. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 3) (400) (Text)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 541 On Measures To Ensure Effectiveness Of State Control Over Privatization Of Defense Complex Enterprises, Organizations (400), Plus Statute On Federal Commission To Implement It (700), Plus List Of Commission Members (500). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 3)

'Procedure For Applying Tax Concessions To Mass Media And Book Products' Signed By Tax Service Chief State Adviser V.V. Gusev, Endorsed By Deputy Finance Minister S.D. Shatalov. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 3) (1900)

SECTION II: POLITICAL (INTERNATIONAL AND CIS AFFAIRS, ELECTIONS, CRIME, POLLUTION)

Government 2 February Decree No. 103 Ratifying U.S. Eximbank Loan For Air Freight Tracking System. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (400) (Text)

Government 6 March Decree No. 257 On Continuing Post-Chernobyl Public Protection Measures In 1996-1997 (1000) Plus Tatyana Smolyakova Commentary (600). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5)

Government 11 March Decree No. 268 On Celebrations To Be Held This Year To Mark Russian Navy's 300th Anniversary (450) Plus Commentary By Navy Cultural Center Aide Yevgeniy Yermakov (600). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5)

Government 21 March Directive No. 411 Ratifying Turkish Loan To Rebuild Central Clinical Hospital. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 6) (200) (Text)

Government 21 March Directive No. 421 Granting 1996 Funding For Presidential Program To Provide Legal Information Backup For State Agencies. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Government 22 March Decree No. 325 Ratifying Statute On Reestablishing Missile And Artillery Academy (50) Plus Commentary By Academy President Vladimir Kireyev (900). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (900)

Yeltsin 22 March Edict No. 414 On Presidential Committee For Information Technology Policy (200) Plus Interview With Committee Chairman Arkadiy Golubkov (1100). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 3)

Government 23 March Decree No. 340 Ratifying (Unpublished) Note To German Government On Funding Of CW Destruction Facilities. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (220) (Text)

Central Electoral Commission 'Clarification' On Some Questions Concerning The Organization Of Work Of

Precinct Electoral Commissions, Approved By CEC Decree No. 84/703-ii, Dated 29 March. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (2200)

Central Electoral Commission Decree No. 84/704-ii, Dated 29 March, On Practice Of Assigning Additional Duties To Territorial And Precinct Electoral Commissions. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (500)

Government 30 March Decree No. 355 On Immediate Measures To Improve Reliability Of Yakutsk City Main Services. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (600)

Government 3 April Decree No. 377 On Adoption Of September 1995 Vienna Convention On Nuclear Safety. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 3) (200) (Text)

Government 3 April Decree No. 379 On Adyge State University. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (250)

Government 3 April Decree No. 384 Including O.G. Dmitriyev On Interdepartmental Council For State Financial Control. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Government 3 April Decree No. 395 Approving Procedure For Work With Projects Financed By IBRD Loans (Actual Procedure To Be Published In 'Business In Russia' Section). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (100)

Government 3 April Decree No. 398 Amending Council Of Ministers Decree No. 941 Of 22 September 1994 On Calculating Length Of Service For Servicemen. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (400)

Government 3 April Decree No. 402 On Backup Services For Russian Military Contingent In Bosnia-Herzegovina. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (500) (Text)

Government 3 April Directive No. 522 Allocating R17 Billion In Aid To Kyrgyzstan In 1996 To Restore Damage Caused By 1992-1995 Natural Disasters. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (150) (Text)

Government 3 April Directive No. 542 On Striking Navy Anniversary Medal. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (50)

Government 4 April Decree No. 374 On Federal Targeted Program For 'Socioeconomic Development And National-Cultural Revival Of The Balkar People In 1996-2000.' (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (500)

Government 4 April Decree No. 406 On Holding 'Russia-96' All-Russia Exhibition And Fair In Moscow In April-June 1996, Approving Organizing Committee Membership (Not Published), Tasking MVD With Policing Tasks, Federal Broadcasting Service With Media Coverage Tasks, Federal, Component Executive Organs With Promotional Tasks. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (450)

Russian Federation Constitutional Court 4 April Ruling No. 9 On Constitutionality Of Moscow, Voronezh, Stavropol Regulations On Registration Of Citizens Taking Up Residence In Those Areas. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 pp 4-5) (7000)

Central Electoral Commission 'Instruction' As Ratified By 5 April Ruling No. 86/716-11 On Procedure For Granting TV Air Time And Publication Space To Presidential Candidates, Their Support Organizations. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 pp 5-6) (6000)

Yeltsin 9 April Directive No. 168 On Measures To Fulfill August 1995 UNSC Resolution On Arms Sales, Supplies To Rwanda. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 4) (Text) (450)

Yeltsin 9 April Directive No. 171 Assigning To FAPSI Task Of Setting Up Presidential Situation Center. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (250) (Text)

Yeltsin 9 April Edict No. 509 On Status Of Federal Commission For Lotteries And Games. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (100)

Yeltsin 10 April Edict No. 522 Instituting Presidential Prizes For Literature And Art, Approving Appended Statute. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 3) (200/500)

Yeltsin 12 April Edict No. 534 Amending Edict No. 294 Of 18 December 1991 'On Especially Valuable Facilities Of Russia's National Heritage.' (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (100)

Yeltsin 13 April Directive No. 188 On Backup Measures For Russian Participation In Council Of Europe, Plus List Of Presidential Acts Thus Rendered Invalid. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 3) (800/200) (Text)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 536 On Creation Of 'Rossiyane' Fund For Support Of Compatriots Abroad. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 3) (1000)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 538 Amending Statute On President's Main Administration For Questions Of State Service And Cadres. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (200)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 540 Ruling Various Past Certain Presidential Edicts Lapsed. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 3) (400)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 542 Giving Federal Program For Destruction Of Chemical Weapons Stockpiles Status Of Presidential Program. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5) (100)

Federal Law No. 30 Dated 13 April, Adopted By State Duma on 15 March, Introducing Amendments, Additions To RSFSR Criminal Code, RSFSR Criminal Procedure Code. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 4) (2800)

Yeltsin 15 April Edict No. 550 On Improving Pension Provision. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 1) (600) (Text)

Yeltsin 15 April Edict No. 561 On Victory Banner. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Apr 96 p 1)

SECTION III: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Government 5 April Decree No. 407 On Submitting Draft Edict To Yeltsin For Extra Post-Chernobyl Medical Measures. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Regional Affairs

Russia: Dudayev's Death Confirmed by Personal Representative in Russia

LD2404091596 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 0800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Vagap Tutakov, Dudayev's personal representative in Russia, confirmed today for our radio station that the Chechen separatist leader had been killed.

[begin Tutakov recording] Nothing sensational happened. It's just that one of Ichkeria's patriots died — not the first, and not the last. The struggle goes on.

The Russian leadership is wrong to rejoice at the misfortune. If they hope that, by killing the legally elected president of Ichkeria, they have subdued the Chechen people, they are very much mistaken.

With the death of the president, the struggle will be continued with three times as much vigor until total victory is achieved over the occupiers. We have no doubt about victory. Our cause is just. The Almighty is with us. We shall win. [end recording]

Russia: Dudayev Said Killed in Rocket Attack on Chechen Village

LD2304162296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1537 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asayev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — Dzhokhar Dudayev died in a rocket attack carried out by federal forces on the immediate surroundings of the village of Gekhi-Chu on the evening of 21 April. A source in "the government of Ichkeria" told ITAR-TASS that Dzhokhar Dudayev arrived at this village, 35 km southwest of Groznyy, with his wife Alevtina Fedorovna and was staying with his personal bodyguards at the house of prosecutor Magomed Dzhaniyev. .

On the evening of 21 April, a satellite linkup was planned with a mediator to discuss the terms of negotiations proposed by Moscow. Dzhokhar Dudayev drove out into open country with his aide Dukvakh Ibragimov, while his wife remained at the house. It was then that the rocket attack occurred. Dudayev was seriously wounded and died the same evening, the source reported.

The funeral is to be held in the village of Shalazhi, 5 km southwest of Gekhi-Chu.

Russia: Aide, Several Close Associates Said Killed With Dudayev

LD2304142196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1408 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asuyev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Groznyy, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — "Dudayev's body is now on the outskirts of the village of Gekhi-Chu," Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov, former head of the Dudayev delegation to the talks with Moscow, told ITAR-TASS today. "Several of his closest associates, including Dzhokhar Dudayev's aide Dukvakha Ibragimov, were killed along with Dudayev," he said.

It has so far not been possible to confirm the information about the death of the Chechen separatist leader on the night of 21 to 22 April [Sunday night] near the village of Gekhi-Chu (30 km southwest of Groznyy) from other sources. [passage omitted]

Russia: Moscow Official, Dudayev Representatives Killed in Chechnya

LD2304143996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1212 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GEKHI-CHU, April 23 (Interfax) — "A senior and influential guest from Moscow" was killed together with two high-ranking representatives from the entourage of the Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev in southwestern Chechnya late on Sunday, well-informed sources from the administration of the Gekhi-Chu village told Interfax.

The killed man had arrived in Chechnya at Dudayev's invitation and was not a Chechen by nationality, the sources said.

The military prosecutor in Dudayev's administration, Magomed Zhaniyev, and the acting personal envoy of the separatist leader in Moscow, Khamad Kurbanov, died in a federal jet strike against a target in the forest 1.5 kilometers to the south of the village of Gekhi-Chu, which was the venue for a meeting with militants.

The total number of casualties amounts to five, by different estimates.

Russia: Yandarbiyev Named as Dudayev Successor in Chechnya

LD2304174496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1711 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 23 Apr (ITAR-TASS) — After Dudayev's death his post as head of the Republic of Ichkeria has been taken by Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, currently vice president, Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov, the head of the Dudayev delegation at the talks with Moscow in 1995, told ITAR-TASS today. He said that this decision was taken on 22 April in the Military Council, "as provided for in the Ichkerian Constitution." Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov added that he "personally saw Dudayev's dead body".

By the evening, the situation in the town was calm. Right at the time ITAR-TASS reported Dudayev's death, shots could be heard fired into the air in many areas of Groznyy where the road blocks of the federal forces are situated.

Shamil Beno, leader of the Chechen public and political movement "Daymokhk," [translation unknown] today indirectly confirmed Dudayev's death. Talking to ITAR-TASS correspondent Mikhail Shevtsov here he said that he had information that the Ichkerian Government had pronounced 24, 25, and 26 April as days of mourning. A ceremony of sacrifice will take place on 26 April.

Shamil Beno believes that after Dudayev's death the situation among the opposition "could take on an unpredictable nature if they fail to promptly solve the division of power." If Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and Aslan Maskhadov, who is the most influential field commander, come to agreement, it will be possible to prevent the fragmentation of the armed formation into small units, Shamil Beno said and added that "one can hold serious talks with Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and Aslan Maskhadov".

Russia: Basayev Agrees to Dudayev Successor Despite Initial Opposition

LD2404090996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0822 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By Sharip Asuyev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY April 24 (Itar-Tass) — Noted Chechen chieftain and terrorist Shamil Basayev opposed the transfer of powers to vice-president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev after the death of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, but later agreed that the vice-president should rule until new elections of a separatist leader, the independent Chechen news agency CHIA said on Wednesday.

It quoted an informed source in the government of the separatists as saying that Basayev and some other chieftains opposed Yandarbiyev as the successor to Dudayev at a joint session of the defence council and the government of the separatists on Monday. However, it was finally decided to abide by the separatist constitution and to transfer Dudayev's powers to Yandarbiyev.

The agency warned that "the death of Dzhokhar Dudayev could throw Chechnya into a war of clans if field commanders had preferred their chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov as the new leader" instead of Yandarbiyev who was appointed vice-president in 1993.

But the fears of a possible clan war were also dispelled by the co-chair of the coordination council and the leader of the party of national independence of Chechnya, Ruslan Kutayev.

He told Tass on Wednesday that field commanders had pledged loyalty to Yandarbiyev.

"Field commanders pledged loyalty to the constitution and the lawfull bodies of power of the republic of Ichkeria (Chechnya) after it became known that Dzhokhar Dudayev was dead", he said.

All movements and parties, which are members of the recently created coordination council, "mourn the death of Dzhokhar Dudayev, but recognise the principle of inheritance of authority in the republic according to which the functions of the president had been entrusted to vice-president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev", Kutayev stressed.

Russia: Volskiy: Dudayev's Successor 'Has No Real Power'

LD2404090596 Moscow 2x2 Television in Russian 0800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Arkadiy Volskiy, a member of the Russian delegation at the talks with Dudayev's supporters, has told the MTV2x2 news service that, according to the constitution, if Dudayev dies, Vice President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev takes over.

[begin Volskiy recording] Not many people really know him. He has no real power over the militants. He is more of a token figure rather than a real figure. It seems to me that real power will be in the hands of either Aslan Maskhadov or Shamil Basayev. If one is to speak on behalf of the Russian side, the candidature of Maskhadov is more preferable, of course. [end recording]

Russia: Maskhadov Said Likely To Be Chechens' 'Real Leader'

LD2404110996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1048 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW April 24 (Itar-Tass) — The death of Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev may radically and positively promote the peaceful Chechen settlement as the most influential man in Chechnya is now separatist chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov, who is well-known and respected by many politicians in Moscow.

Although officially Dudayev's powers have been transferred to his deputy Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the real leader of Ichkeria, as the separatists call Chechnya, is Maskhadov who is widely respected in the rebel republic and is well-known to the Russian leadership as he was the chief peace negotiator last summer.

Presidential legal aide Mikhail Krasnov, who also participated in the last summer peace talks in Groznyy, told Tass on Wednesday that although Yandarbiyev is "a grey Cardinal" in Dudayev's entourage, his influence does not spread further than the so-called state council of Ichkeria.

During the summer negotiations the name of Yandarbiyev was not even mentioned either officially or in private talks, according to Krasnov who said that Yandarbiyev has no real power in his hands in contrast to Maskhadov.

"Some time ago we had (Konstantin) Chernenko as the General Secretary of the central committee (of the CPSU), but he was not the real leader", Krasnov said referring to ailing Soviet communist leader who was replaced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985.

Maskhadov has all chances to become the real leader now. Russian Interior minister Anatoliy Kulikov, Nationalities minister Vyacheslav Mikhaylov have both recently told Tass that they would prefer to negotiate with Maskhadov. The same opinion is shared by Arkadiy Volskiy, the number 2 man at last year talks.

All the Russian negotiators agreed that Maskhadov was a staunch supporter of a peaceful settlement of the crisis and it was only the opposition from Dudayev which did not allow him to fulfil the military agreement with Moscow signed on July 31, 1995.

Maskhadov did not have power enough to neutralise the opposition of Dudayev as he could have been killed for disobeyance.

Now Maskhadov can show himself as an independent leader of Chechnya as he enjoys support of field commanders and of the local population who often rallied with portraits of Dudayev only for fear of punishment.

It is not surprising that popular Chechen chieftain Shamil Basayev opposed the transfer of powers to Yandarbiyev and agreed only that he governs until new elections.

All Tass correspondents who worked in Chechnya can confirm that Maskhadov is not only a professional military man, but also a good speaker who can convince his chieftains and the fighters in the necessity to achieve peace.

Russia: ITAR-TASS Carries Dudayev Obituary

LD2304171996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1629 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Apr 23 (Itar-Tass) — Dzhokhar Musayevich Dudayev was born on 15 May 1944 in the village if Pervomayskoye of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous republic.

The Dudayevs, together with other Chechen families, were soon exiled to Kazakhstan on order from Joseph Stalin. Dzhokhar Dudayev returned to Northern Caucasus in 1957.

He learned to fly at the Tambov higher pilot-training school and later graduated from the Gagarin Air Force Academy as an air force pilot and engineer first class. He retired from active service in 1990 in the rank of major-general.

From 1987-1990, Dudayev served as commander of a division of heavy bombers stationed in Estonia and as chief of the Tartu garrison. He was known to Estonians as a "rebellious general" after he refused to obey the order to block Estonia's parliament and television centre.

In 1990, Dudayev was transferred from Tartu to Groznyy, where he resigned from active service. He was offered high posts in the air force, including that of the commander of an airforce army, but he declined, saying: "For me, being a rank-and-file Chechen is the highest post."

On August 19, 1991 during the first hours of the botched coup in Moscow, Dudayev took the side of the Russian parliament and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He next demanded independence for Chechnya.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR condemned Dudayev's claim in its resolution dated 10 October 1991. Groznyy responded by calling parliamentary and presidential elections in the Chechen republic. Dudayev was elected President of Chechnya and proclaimed his republic "independent."

In December 1994, Russia sent troops into Chechnya in a bid to protect the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and keep the Chechen republic within the Federation.

Dudayev was reported killed during a missile attack on the village of Gekhi-Chu from April 21-22.

People who served with Dudayev said he was a tough, harsh and hot-tempered man. He used to be rebuked for authoritarianism and love of power. He later learned to keep his emotions in check and look unperturbed in any situation.

Dudayev was a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1968 to 1991, when the party was dissolved. He never left the party formally.

His wife Alevtina is a fashion designer. His son Avlar was born in 1971, his daughter Dana was born in 1973, and his younger son Dega was born in 1983.

Dudayev loved music and poetry, particularly that written by 19th century Russian poets Mikhail Lermontov and Aleksandr Pushkin. He also enjoyed Russian prose writers Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov.

Dudayev played many sports and won distinction in wrestling, gymnastics, tennis and karate.

Russia: Deputy Borovoy Interviewed on Impact of Dudayev's Death

LD2304214596 Moscow NTV in Russian
1535 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Report] This station in its "Hero of the Day" program carries a 25-minute live studio interview with Duma Deputy Konstantin Borovoy, who recently met Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev. The interview is conducted by anchorman Pavel Lobkov. The interview deals with the situation around reports of Dudayev's death.

Asked whether denials of Dudayev's death can be believed, Borovoy says: "I think that these denials are connected with the fact that a very dangerous situation is arising in Chechnya because if, it turns out that the special services did that, there may be retaliations. If it turns out to be true [changes thought], the consequences are very dangerous because if nobody manages to concentrate power in Chechnya now — and you understand there are field commanders, very independent people — that structure of resistance may break down into many independent structures, forces, groups. And a Hizballah-style situation will arise in which these groups act individually, not in a coordinated manner. In any event considerably more people will need to be assembled for talks than now. Not to beat about the bush, if three forces could hold talks now, unless a leader arises, should Dudayev be dead, of course, the situation will grow much more complicated. To say nothing of the fact that retaliatory measures have been provided for, and Dudayev himself spoke of that, should there be an attack on him. That unfortunately is the most dangerous version."

Asked to name possible Dudayev successors, Borovoy says: "Basayev has the greatest authority in society today, but he is the least acceptable figure to Moscow for talks. Therefore I am very much counting on him not being put forward as leader."

"There is also Aslan Maskhadov," Lobkov says. Borovoy replies: "Quite right! There is another figure who is acceptable to Moscow, for instance, Usman Imayev, who recently appeared in Chechnya, and many participants in previous talks said that he was the most acceptable figure."

Lobkov says: "So there is Imayav who began the talks but was then removed by Dudayev, and Maskhadov who was then appointed in Imayev's place?" Boroboy replies: "There is also the possibility of a compromise figure. There is Lecha Magomadov. He is a member of Zavgayev's government but is respected by the other side, too."

Lobkov asks Konstantin Borovoy, regarding the impact of the rumored death of Dudayev on the Russian-Chechen peace process: "It it is not ruled out that — after a lengthy time, there won't be anyone to hold talks with, and that Kremlin peace plan may be jeopardized because even the King of Morocco, who is really a very authoritative Arab leader and completely without any personal obligations to the rebel leader — there won't even be anyone for people like that to hold talks with?"

Borovoy replies: "The most sensible thing that we, the Russian side, can do now is to help the Chechens to reach agreement in one way or another, to begin talks, to begin mutual consultations. That would be the wisest thing, too."

Lobkov then describes Borovoy as "the last Russian politican to talk to, to see Dzhokhar Dudayev" during a peace mission in Chechnya.

Borovoy says: "One should take into account the possibility that these reports may be a provocation. Although the latest reports allow one to think that the first reports are evidently true."

Asked if it was easy to get into Dudayev's camp, Borovoy replies: "It is not difficult to reach Dudayev, especially when it is clear that it is a peace mission."

Borovoy goes on to say that the situation is very dangerous if reports about Dudayev's death are true. Asked if an internecine war is possible if Dudayev is dead, Borovoy said it is. Borovoy said he will not go to Chechnya until the situation has become clearer.

Russia: Dudayev's Death Expected To Benefit Kremlin

MK2404110696 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Alan Kasayev: "Dzhokhar Dudayev Killed? If So, a Break Can Occur in the War"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] It is quite clear that in this case Dudayev's death was not an accident but the result of planned action which — there is no hiding it — has long been expected from Russian special services. A break can now occur in the whole of the Chechen epic, because the new leadership, represented by Aslan Maskhadov and a number of influential field commanders, is not as intransigent as Dudayev was. On the other hand, much will depend on the second in command: Vice President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, an extreme radical as concerns contacts with the Russian leadership, but with no base among either the gunmen or the greater part of Chechnya's population.

In any event, until the previously efficient Dudayev propaganda machine turns the dead general into another Imam Shamil, the Kremlin has a good chance of turning the situation to its own advantage and sitting down at the negotiations table with Maskhadov, Yarikhanov, and people supporting them. Evidently something along these lines is already being done: At any rate, the simultaneous elimination of Dudayev, his representative to Russia Kurbanov, and his aide Ibragimov, as well as the arrest in Moscow of Dudayev's envoy Vagap Tutakov, cannot be a simple coincidence.

Incidentally, this puts a new light on the events related to Pavel Grachev's latest statement in the Duma and the absence of any negative reaction on President Yeltsin's part to the defense minister's statement. [passage omitted]

Russia: Paper Questions Dudayev's Death, Hints at Conspiracy

MK2404115696 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Georgiy Bovt and Natalya Kalashnikova: "It Is Not Known Whether Dudayev Is Dead, But a Funeral Will Take Place"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Many have queried at length: How much longer?! Meaning that Russia's special services could not track and neutralize Dudayev. The charges of impotence were usually followed by the hint: Presumably Dudayev has some compromising material against top Russian officials stashed away somewhere in the West, marked: "To be opened in the event of my death." In this context it cannot be ruled out that in the very near future some sensational leaks could occur. Under another theory, it was "politically inexpedient" to eliminate Dudayev, because he effectively controlled the gunmen, and therefore negotiations with him were inevitable. Yet another theory is connected with the name of Pavel Grachev. His statement in the Duma last Friday appeared dubious to many, while Yevgeniy Kiselev in his Itogi TV program went as far as to suggest that Grachev "has betrayed the president." Maybe Grachev, who earlier also demonstrated his intransigence toward Dudayev, decided to cut "the Gordian knot" of Chechnya. It was not an accident that he complained in the Duma that he "was not being allowed to finish off" the gunmen. Maybe this was what was in effect done, when Dudayev went into an open field (under one theory) to negotiate with Moscow's go-between through a satellite communications system. It was a matter of technology to track him. We are not making statements; we are only making suppositions. Dudayev could also have been killed by accident. But the theory that Moscow finally signed a death verdict on the general is backed up by Dudayev's extensive interview with INTERFAX over the weekend. It was irreconcilable in form and content: Negotiations only with Yeltsin, without any mediators; and independence for Chechnya. He issued a challenge to Moscow: "I am preparing to move from defense to offense." The challenge was backed up by the execution of a convoy of Russian troops. There is yet another theory: Dudayev was killed by his own. In the same way, it will be recalled, as Gamsakhurdia was: A brawl, with shooting, and then it transpired that the Georgian president, who had become inconvenient to many of his own associates, was killed. Another mysterious death of another Caucasian, Stalin, should also be recalled here. His loyal servant Beria was by his bedside day and night. He was so loyal that he did not even give the doctors access to the sick man. Yesterday Yarikhanov announced a state of mourning. Why did he keep silent for a whole day? He could not get in touch with Moscow by phone? Or did the separatists lapse into infighting/consultations? And why was, for instance, Maskhadov, "second in command after Dudayev," also silent? The burial of the body (Dudayev's?) is scheduled for today in the village of Shalazhi. The "funeral commission" will apparently also be headed by Yarikhanov. Under Soviet tradition, the head of a commission for the funeral of a general secretary himself becomes the next general secretary.

What next? Paradoxical as it might be, two mutually exclusive scenarios were born in Strasbourg, where a Russian Duma delegation is attending a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE]. PACE President Leni Fisher [name as transliterated] learned of Dudayev's purported death from a KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent literally out in the lobby. Her first reaction was: "This is terrible; the consequences will be terrible." The Russian delegation, quite the contrary, was swayed by a different opinion: "Now the war might finally end." The truth, apparently, lies in between. To be sure, there will be those who will try to organize a kind of "jihad" across Russia. Infighting might begin among the field commanders. But many of them might also realize that without the irreconcilable Dudayev around it would be more reasonable for them to come to terms with Moscow. If leadership is claimed by Yarikhanov, he has some experience with such negotiations. True, yet another assumption could also be made: Maybe Dudayev is alive? His lookalike will be hastily buried, while the head of the separatists himself will take shelter in a Muslim country under the protection of some royal grace. And then legends about Dudayev will be going around Chechnya as they are now going around the world about Martin Bormann. Concerning the latter, it was also said that he knew too much....

Russia: 'Ichkeriya Government' Rejects Yeltsin Peace Plan

LD2304163896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1605 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sharip Asuyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 23 Apr (Itar-Tass) — "The Chechen Republic of Ichkeriya Government" today appealed to the Chechen people "to close ranks even more in the struggle to defend the fatherland" in connection with [Dzhokhar] Dudayev's death. Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov, head of the Chechen delegation at the talks [with Russia] in 1995 gave ITAR-TASS Groznyy bureau a statement which says that "the Chechen people's strength and potential are inexhaustible and depend only upon the will of the great Allah" and that no one will succeed in enslaving the Chechen people.

The statement rejects the plan for a peaceful settlement in Chechnya announced by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 31 March and describes it as a manifestation of "cynical demagoguery."

"The government of Ichkeriya" regards Dudayev's death as "yet another terrorist act" and states that it was carried out "when he was discussing Moscow's conditions for negotiations on the telephone with an intermediary." "A rocket attack was carried out on Dudayev's working headquarters. This time the enemy hit the target. The first president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeriya died as a result of his injuries," says the statement. "In this hour of our great grief we, Dzhokhar Dudayev's comrades-in-arms and followers, state that our hatred for the aggressor and its stooges has only grown stronger, as has the necessity to carry Dzhokhar's banner even more resolutely to the final victory and this victory will be ours. We call on the Chechen people to close ranks even more in their struggle to defend the fatherland," write the authors of the document.

Russia: 'Realistic Steps' on Chechnya Plan 'Still Not Taken'

MM2404085196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Igor Rotar: "Realistic Steps Toward Peace in Chechnya Have Still Not Been Taken, Republic Chief Said to IZVESTIYA in Telephone Conversation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 23 April an attempt was made in Groznyy on the life of Badruddi Dzhamalkhanov, Chechen Republic Government vice premier. The vice premier received a spinal injury but two of his escorts were killed. A Chechen Republic representative under the Russian Federation president, Isa Aliroyev, informed IZVESTIYA that Badruddi Dzhamalkhanov was traveling to work early in the morning when someone suddenly opened up with an automatic weapon from a car approaching from the opposite direction. Dzhamalkhanov received attention then left the hospital.

Until 1991 Dzhamalkhanov worked as Shalinskiy Rayon Soviet Executive Committee chairman, but immediately after Dzhokhar Dudayev came to power he proved to be one of the most active opponents of the Chechen Republic's first president. Together with Provisional Council Chairman Umar Avturkhanov he formed the anti-Dudayev opposition's armed detachments in the village of Znamenskoye. After Groznyy was taken by Russian forces he worked as minister for affairs of civil defense, emergency situations, and the elimination of natural disasters in the government of Salambek Khadzhiyev.

"Badruddi Dzhamalkhanov is one of the most prominent members of the opposition to the Dudayev regime, and we can therefore have no doubt as to who were the perpetrators of this attempt on his life. This is certainly not the first attempt on lives of the Chechen Republic's leadership — as a matter of fact, Dudayev's men really hunt these people down," Isa Aliroyev considers.

The situation in Chechnya remains extremely tense. The Russian Federation Territorial Administration press center in Groznyy reported to IZVESTIYA that the most unstable location in the republic is still the rayon center of Shali, situated 40 km from Groznyy. Federal forces are continuing to blockade this population center. In conversation with your IZVESTIYA correspondent, Aliroyev did not exclude the possibility of federal troops launching an assault on the rayon center. In Aliroyev's opinion, the combat operations here did not wind down after the public announcement of Boris Yeltsin's plan for a peaceful settlement of the situation in the Chechen Republic.

"It is first and foremost the gunmen who are, of course, causing the war to continue through their provocations, but the federal forces willingly give in to these provocations. You should not respond to a burst of automatic fire by opening up with mortars," Aliroyev considers.

In essence, the Chechen Republic chief also indirectly agrees with Aliroyev's assessment. In a conversation with your IZVESTIYA correspondent, a very cautious Doku Zavgayev admitted that realistic steps to implement the president's plan for a settlement have not yet been taken.

Meantime, the latest session of the State Commission for a Settlement in the Chechen Republic took place under the chairmanship of Viktor Chernomyrdin in Moscow 23 April. ITAR-TASS reports that the session examined a range of questions concerning the "organization of consultations and negotiations with the separatists with a simultaneous cessation of terrorist acts by the gunmen." Commission members continued to discuss missions "connected with the redeployment of federal forces and the plan to withdraw them from the republic's peaceful rayons."

Russia: Chernomyrdin: 'Carrot-and-Stick Policy' To Continue in Chechnya

LD2304171196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [no dateline as received] A working commission formed by President Boris Yeltsin flies out to Groznyy on Wednesday to investigate last week's ambush of a Russian convoy by Chechen rebels in the south which, according to varying counts, left from 53 to 90 Russian troops dead, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told a session of the state commission for Chechnya he leads on Tuesday.

He said the working commission is expected to report back to the president by next Tuesday.

The prime minister said there were restrictions set on Russian troops in fighting against terrorism in Chechnya and that "no one has ever talked about this." In this connection, he said the U.N. charter provides for what is called coercion to peace.

He reaffirmed that Moscow would continue a carrot-and-stick policy in Chechnya.

On the prospects of a regional peace settlement, Chernomyrdin said the rebel attack on Russian troops outside Dachu-Borzoy showed that "the bandits do not want peace."

On the positive side, he pointed to a peace pact drawn up by representatives of the peoples of Chechnya at their assembly in Groznyy last week. The pact is open for signing by all peace upholders in the republic.

Commission members and Russian Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhaylov involved in the assembly session believe that most Chechens want peace, Chernomyrdin said.

In the meantime, the Russian State Duma is preparing a resolution on amnesty to members of all rebel units in Chechnya except those involved in grievous crimes, Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev told Interfax on Tuesday.

President Yeltsin's peace plan of March 31 also held out the possibility of amnesty including separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Seleznev said the Yeltsin plan would come under house discussion at a session in May. He said the delay is caused by a lack of mechanism of appropriate discussion. "This could be a report by Chernomyrdin as head of the commission for Chechnya or republican head Doku Zavgayev or any commission member from the government side," he said expressing certainty that the issue would be discussed next month.

Seleznev is against publication of the details of the Yeltsin plan because of the existence of powerful groups opposed to the plan as evidenced by the rebel attack on a Russian convoy on April 16. "If we draw up and publish the schedules of troop withdrawals from Chechnya, we will have prepared the rebels in advance," he believes.

For his part, Deputy Duma Speaker Alexander Shokhin thinks the details of the plan must be made available only to a narrow circle of officials.

In an interview with Interfax on Monday, he said this includes leaders of the parliamentary factions and heads of the related committees — defense and security.

He said the peace plan must contain details such as kinds of troops, army actions, definition of a sanitary cordon around Chechnya and prevention of arms supply or infiltration of militants from neighboring Dagestan, Azerbaijan and Ingushetia.

Shokhin blamed the Dachu-Borzoy tragedy on the absence of such a plan. He also believes that any involvement in drafting a peace plan by the leaders of Duma factions would indicate that concerted effort is being taken to resolve a painful issue while "forgetting that this can be a topic for political demonstrations ahead of the presidential election."

In the meantime, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, PACE, has called for an immediate implementation of the Yeltsin plan or any other peace plans. But it said no progress could be made unless all parties including Dudayev are involved.

This follows a draft resolution by the Assembly's political commission to be unveiled at the PACE session on Wednesday.

The resolution calls for an unconditional condemnation of human rights abuses in Chechnya both by federal troops and Chechen rebels.

It accuses Russian troops of disproportionate and unjustified use of force against civilians banned by the 1949 Geneva convention and the 1977 second protocol to it.

The resolution says Russia has so far failed to honor obligations towards Chechnya it gave while entering into the Council of Europe.

It proposes that PACE's special commission for Chechnya meet urgently in Moscow and Groznyy to help the OSCE mission restart dialogue between the warring sides.

Russia: State Commission on Chechnya Discusses Military Issues

LD2304201396 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On Tuesday the state commission for the settlement of the Chechen crisis began and completed its work prior to the information coming in about Dudayev's possible death. Here is our correspondent Regina Lukashina.

[Lukashina] Behind closed doors, members of the commission discussed strictly military issues, including security measures that will have to be strengthened while the federal troops are redeployed generally and in connection with the attack on the tank convoy in particular. [passage omitted]

Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the general staff, said after the commission meeting that sharp words were spoken as the plan for the redeployment of troops was ratified.

[begin Kolesnikov recording] The plan is quite flexible, allowing us to revise both the places of temporary and permanent redeployment, depending on the situation, and to act accordingly. [end recording]

[Lukashina] According to Nikolay Semenov, head of the territorial directorate of the federal organs of power in Chechnya, the phased withdrawal of troops must be accompanied by security being provided for the civilian population. As for the talks process, according to him, the statements by Tatar President

Mintimer Shaymiyev's representative were not considered enough. But here is Shaymiyev himself. He is talking about possible talks with Dzhokhar Dudayev.

[begin Shaymiyev recording] I am driven by one goal: People are being killed. This must be stopped. And everything possible must be done for this purpose, without doubt, on the basis of the principle of preserving the statehood and integrity of the Russian Federation. I believe that [words indistinct] must be heard. It is another matter what the answer will be. Why? Because the crisis has been going on for so long and yet nobody has yet sat down to talk to him directly about the actual object of conflict. [end recording]

Russia: Grachev Says Statements on Chechen Events Misinterpreted

LD2304180096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1654 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHABAROVSK, April 23 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said on Tuesday that the federal force in Chechnya is complying with the cessation of military operations ordered by President Boris Yeltsin on March 31.

The compliance is completely relevant to the situation in which the federal troops are, Grachev said.

Speaking to reporters at the Khabarovsk airport today, Grachev explained that the presidential decree to stop military operations at midnight March 31 immediately reached the troops as the order to move back.

However, the troops required six days to go out of action with minimal losses.

"After six days, complying with the president's decree, we have gone out of combat, moved away from the adversary and deployed in base areas. After that preparation has been started for moving part of units to permanent deployment sites outside the territory of Chechnya," Grachev said.

As for the 205th Motorised Infantry Division, which is to remain in Chechnya for permanent deployment, Grachev said it "now is in its positions at permanent deployment sites in Shali and at two airports — Severniy and Khankala."

Reporters asked for Grachev's clarifications about the criticism of the presidential cease-fire decree which he voiced in the State Duma on April 19 and about his earlier statement that the orders reached troops only on April 6.

Grachev answered that his speech in the Duma was misinterpreted, in particular in the Itogi television programme.

He claimed the programme's commentator "has turned everything upside down."

Russia: Yeltsin Approves Juridical Status of Russo-Chinese Border

LD2404091096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0732 GMT 24 Apr 96

[By Anatoliy Vostokov, Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHABAROVSK, April 24 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin stressed the importance of a juridical status given to the Russo-Chinese border on the Russian Far East, speaking in Khabarovsk prior to departure to China.

"For the first time in nearly 300 years of our relations with China we have a fully demarcated and juridically regulated border," Yeltsin said at a meeting with representatives of the public today. "I think you still remember the times when China claimed 1.5 million square kilometers of the Russian territory. Now this problem has been removed," Yeltsin said.

However, he noted that there were some problems left in connection with the border and primarily, in the Ussuriysk and Khasan regions of the Maritime Territory. The president said that the concern of the population of the Maritime Territory was understandable, but stressed that international commitments must be fulfilled. The length of the border line running across the territory of these two regions is nearly 19 kilometers. If the border is not demarcated here it means that the entire 4,000 kilometers of the eastern part of the border will be called into question. It will be the Russian Far East that will suffer then both politically and economically, the president said.

Yeltsin said that he believes his task and the task of the federal authorities is to look for disentanglement and compromise, but noted that "there were cases when we would not agree to a compromise, and in particular, on problems of territorial jurisdiction of the three islands: Bolshoy Ussuriysky and Tarabarov islands on the Amur river in the proximity of Khabarovsk and the Bolshoy island on the Argun river in the Chita region. Our stance remains invariable as far as these islands are concerned. The border line should remain where it runs at present," Yeltsin said.

Speaking on economic problems of the Russian Far East, Yeltsin outlined fundamentals of the program for long-term development of the Russian Far East and the Baykal region. He noted that the program of the development of these regions was orientated at huge investments expected to reach 370 trillion rubles in the period of 10 years. The budgetary allocations will account for one-fourth of all investments with the state disbursements to the region expected to create an incentive for investments provided by other sources, including from abroad.

The president noted that the Far East has good opportunities to become Russia's gateway to the Asian-Pacific region. To open these gates and overcome former isolation from neighboring countries is a task of strategic importance. "Therefore, I attach great importance to the development of relations with our powerful neighbors — China, Japan, Korea, the United States, Canada, and other countries connected with the Pacific Ocean," Yeltsin said.

Economic Issues

Russia: Livshits Interviewed on Economic Priorities

964E0957A Moscow INTERFAKS-AIF in Russian 25-31 Mar 96 No 12, pp 1-3

[Interview with Aleksandr Livshits, assistant to the RF president, by special correspondent Boris Grishchenko; place and date not given: "Russia's Isolation in the Risk Space"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Aleksandr Livshits, assistant to the RF [Russian Federation] president, is known by sight from his press articles and television appearances. Now, however, this influential economic scientist is popular even in places that the capital's newspapers do not reach. By order of RF President Boris Yeltsin, his assistant has become the coordinator of the nationwide "battle for wages." Someone aptly nicknamed him the "human economic rights representative." Having accepted this "title," A. Livshits saddled himself with a very complex task requiring additional expenditures of time, which an assistant to the head of state is always very short of. Nevertheless, A. Livshits made time for the weekly INTERFAKS-AIF, answering questions by special correspondent Boris Grishchenko.

[Grishchenko] In your opinion, what is now the main characteristic of the economic situation in Russia?

[Livshits] The main thing now is to maintain the existing situation, ruling out the destabilization of the domestic economy and, at the same time, making decisions that would advance economic reform.

To maintain the situation means to maintain the basic financial parameters, the budget, and the amounts of the money supply and to prevent the growth of inflation and the further decline in production. The changes that have occurred recently are connected with the fact that, in contrast to last year, the RF President, immediately after the publication of the annual message to the parliament, began a certain correction of the economic policy, keeping in mind the priority task—to create reliable guarantees for people's social and economic rights. This dictates the present "battle for wages," pensions, and special payments to citizens from the federal budget.

[Grishchenko] What complicates the situation in the economy?

[Livshits] Of course, the approaching elections. In any country elections give hardly anything to the economy. For example, it is known that political scientists specializing in U.S. affairs never study the administration policy six months before presidential elections and half a year after them.

Because six months "before that" one cannot understand anything owing to the election hullabaloo and half a year later, if the former head of the administration retains his post, he begins to make good on his preelection promises. If, however, he loses his post, the newly elected president begins "to correct the mistakes" of his predecessor. In other words, during the first half year after elections, in practice, the president does not conduct his own policy.

To complicate the preelection situation, including in the economy, Russia has its own special reasons (see the diagram on page 3). It is easy to detect the difference in the size of the zone of risk connected with elections—ours and those of the United States. Unfortunately, ours is bigger.

For example, the recent decisions adopted by the State Duma on the Belovezhskaya agreement convince us of this. According to my belief, this step by the lower chamber buries the illusion, which has still flickered in society, that, allegedly, the communists are simply recruiting (which is natural) their electorate, but they will become completely different when they receive power. We must be realists. The communists set for themselves the task of denouncing Belovezh agreements, and they fulfilled it. Consequently, they will just as persistently fulfill all their other tasks. Thereby, the space of risk for the country is expanding in the direct sense of this word.

[Grishchenko] In your opinion, what can happen in the economy if the communists come to power?

[Livshits] Anything is possible. Here is a figure, which has not yet been published. According to expert data, during past years foreigners' demand for shares of Russian privatized enterprises was estimated in billions of dollars. For the first half of this year (that is, until

June), the total collection of statements of intention amounts to approximately $350,000. As they said at one time, thanks to the party for our happy childhood!

In this connection I ask myself the following question: Who in Russia will directly benefit from the artificial confrontation of political preelection vectors? I do not find any. An everyday conversation, which I had with a person who voted for the communists in the elections of the State Duma, comes to mind. He said openly: "If I had earnings or income of $2,000 a month, I would vote for Boris Yeltsin in June."

In my opinion, this person intuitively has arrived at the conclusion that by no means everything in present Russia is hopelessly bad. Simply, he is chronically short of money, and it seems that other problems do not worry him, including the problem of the infamous deficit, from which many generations of our fellow citizens have suffered.

[Grishchenko] Perhaps you came across a not quite typical representative of the communist electorate?

[Livshits] It seems to me that the program, with which the communists are going to the elections, in fact, does not correspond to the expectations of many in the communist electorate itself. I am not sure that this circumstance will not have the most unexpected impact on the communists in the course of the elections.

If they keep telling their potential voters that everything is absolutely bad in Russia now and that nothing at all has come out of economic reforms, such a position will not suit many.

[Grishchenko] In what do you see contradictions here?

[Livshits] For me personally the communists' quite innocent, at first glance, phrase that, in case of their victory, they will support in the economy everything that was done according to law—let, they say, no one fear anything—seems the most dangerous.

It should be remembered that the new Russian economy was created in a totally empty legal space. Everything in it that was not filled by law, naturally, relied on the president's edicts. If we follow the communist logic, their economic policy, when they come to power, will begin with the revision of edicts.

[Grishchenko] In your opinion, in what spheres will the first steps be taken?

[Livshits] For example, the edict on privatization. In fact, an indisputable redivision of property will begin. After all, all privatizaton was built on presidential edicts, beginning with vouchers and ending with mortgage auctions.

[Grishchenko] It is unlikely that millions of citizens, who do not own large property, will want this...

[Livshits] However, there was also an edict on free trade. This means that, if there is a great desire, it will be possible to bring virtually the entire RF population to account on the basis of the article "speculation."

On the same grounds, it is possible, if there is an urge, to institute criminal proceedings against the majority of fellow citizens for a violation of the law on currency operations. If you exchanged $100 for rubles, this is a crime. Thus, it seems to me that it is premature to talk about the solidity of the economic interests of the present communist electorate.

[Grishchenko] However, the majority of Russians are ready to follow those who promise them a better life in the very near future...

[Livshits] We do not promise, we act, but they do not let us... Please recall the infamous contest for the purchase of the shares of the Russian Svyazinvest Joint-Stock Company by one respectable Italian firm. The deal, which unexpectedly did not go through last fall, could have brought Russia $1.5 billion. I would like to reproduce part of my dialogue with a Western entrepreneur after the unsuccessful contest. A detail of no small importance: This occurred in January.

"Why was the contest canceled when everything was ready for a deal and the benefit seemed obvious and mutual to the parties?"—I asked the person I was talking to. "There are technical details, which must be discussed," the partner answered, adding that this "discussion" required half a year. To my suggestion to accelerate the rates of work and to do everything necessary, for example, in four months, he shook his head: "We will not manage to do this before July..."

Whom does Russia and Russians have to thank for the loss of $1.5 billion? Perhaps Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov?

One and a half billion dollars is a sum, which, converted into rubles, covers 100 percent the debts of the federal budget on wages to power departments. Who took away this money from soldiers and officers? Not those politicians, who in words so zealously worry about the security of the state and society? This is what is distressing: Servicemen could have already received this money personally. The requisites of accounts, to which we were about to transfer these funds, were ready. We were about to, but did not, transfer them. This Svyazinvest project deal, which did not take place, is only one example. Unfortunately, such examples, which complicate the factor of the implementation of economic policy, are not decreasing. Now, however, Russian authorities are ready for changes in people's economic behavior under the effect of the preelection situation.

[Grishchenko] In what is this readiness expressed?

[Livshits] We are ready, in particular, for possible changes in dealers' plans on the state treasury bond market. We are ready for a rush or an increase in the demand for currency on the part of citizens. We are ready for those troubles connected with the effect of other destabilizing factors capable of affecting the Russian market, which has not become stronger.

[Grishchenko] In case of the communists' victory in the elections, is a return to the previous economic model possible?

[Livshits] First, I consider this question purely hypothetical. To reply to it, there can be only one answer: A mechanical return to the former "socialist model of management" is no longer possible in Russia.

Another thing is possible. If we indulge in fantasy and for an instance visualize the communists' victory in June, I can say with full confidence that the party of inflation, not the Communist Party, will come to power.

[Grishchenko] What kind of party is this?

[Livshits] In its composition this party is much broader than the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. It includes sizable forces, which support the Communist Party precisely because of its inflationary orientation.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation is inflationary in its very essence. One can hardly imagine that, if Gennadiy Andreyevich (Zyuganov—INTERFAKS-AIF) finds himself in the presidential chair, he will announce in his program speech: "Financial stabilization is my goal."

No, he will say: "An upsurge of industry and the restoration of the national economy are my goal..." He simply cannot have another way out except to proclaim large-scale projects.

However, to rapidly raise, for example, industry, money is needed. It can be taken from two sources—either from the Central Bank or from the federal budget. Of course, it is possible to take it from the population, but our fellow citizens have long been afraid of everything. I think that, in case of an appeal to them, rather they will try to buy something valuable "as a reserve."

Let us examine the situation further. It is impossible to take anything from the Central Bank because there is a law and there is Sergey Dubinin. It is also impossible to take anything from the federal budget because there is an appropriate law on the federal budget. Consequently, the first steps of the new government could be directed toward a change in laws on the federal budget and the Central Bank.

[Grishchenko] Are there no legal ways of changing such laws?

[Livshits] At first glance such steps could even seem natural and politically acceptable. They would not cause an open rejection in the world, as, for example, the transition to the rationing system, or something in the same spirit, did.

However, an increase in the deficit is the essence of the replacement of laws because it is no longer conceivable to increase taxes, nor does it seem possible to lower budget expenditures.

[Grishchenko] What will be in such a case?

[Livshits] During the first months after such steps, prices, perhaps, will not even jump high. After all, the anti-inflationary potential established by the present government is quite solid. This March with its 2.5-percent inflation confirms this. On the other hand, a large budget deficit will be revealed further, and direct crediting through the Central Bank will begin because the state treasury bond market is virtually oversaturated and there is nothing left to borrow there.

If we further analyze such a situation, the IMF will be the first to react to it (I assume that such a reaction is also predicted by communist analysts). They will try to convince people: Finally, we have thrown off the running knot of the IMF. However, getting rid of this "running knot" will cost us not only $4 billion in 1996 alone. Russia will manage, although with difficulty, such a sum.

Such actions would certainly bring about our rupture with the Paris club. Such a course would certainly cause nonresidents' departure from the state treasury bond market and would result in a ban on the floating of Russian bonds in Europe.

[Grishchenko] What general damage could be done to the country if its leadership carried out such a thing in practice?

[Livshits] According to preliminary calculations, the total "price" of this is $22-24 billion in the current year alone. All the currency reserves of the Russian Federation [RF] are half of this and are earmarked for other purposes. Therefore, if such an alternative arises, the West will want, first of all, to get back its money. It makes absolutely no difference to it what will happen in Russia. We are alone in the face of our own choice, of the risk imposed on young Russia by the opponents of reforms.

[Grishchenko] However, one can try to resist the dictate. We have already had such historical experience...

[Livshits] It seems that Zyuganov is trying, as far as possible, to repeat it, maintaining that "we will not start begging on our knees for mercy from the West." The West's response will be unequivocal—seizure of our accounts. Taking into consideration that the currency reserves of the RF Central Bank are abroad, first of all, the country will be deprived of all its currency reserves. Now this is done very efficiently through the court. Everyone understands what will be later. I do not want to use the word "disaster," especially as we have analyzed by no means the most probable situation. I suggest that we return to present Russian realities.

[Grishchenko] Some economists now come out in favor of improving the Russian economy through an inflationary stimulation of demand. What do you think about this?

[Livshits] I do not reject these ideas 100 percent. Russia has already arrived at the plateau of low inflation, where, in principle, such a step is possible. In life, however, low inflation is still very unstable. In my opinion, such heating up, nevertheless, is premature.

Incidentally, this heating up can be carried out only if there are agreements with international financial organizations, which control Russia in a weekly regime. The debts of the former Union hang like a heavy load on the country's neck.

I would like to recall that the IMF represents not so much money as a symbol of the fact that it is possible to deal with a specific country and to restructure its debts; in brief, about debts. In 1991 the debt of the former USSR totaled approximately $70 billion. Now it is $120 billion. However, the RF has no special problems with the $50 billion that it owes. Russia is paying all the interest and repaying the principal part of the debt. This is a normal debt, which many countries have. The previous load is another matter. It really weighs down on it, representing a great danger for the economy of the new country.

[Grishchenko] In your opinion, what is the future of mortgage auctions?

[Livshits] I was present at the beginning of these auctions. Their very idea seemed promising to me. From the point of view of daily life, it is understandable, simply because what one cannot sell one should not keep in vain.

However, it is impossible not to admit that from the very beginning the plan for holding these auctions was, to put it mildly, rather weak. No wonder the RF President had to especially issue two edicts literally after the first plan, to give five or six orders to the government, and to remove a number of enterprises from auctions. Even after this the auction plan cannot be considered ideal.

I know only one thing: We now direct all those who were involved in auctions toward resolving disputable questions through the court.

[Grishchenko] How do you see the fate of the "currency corridor," which is so much being discussed and debated?

[Livshits] Everything will depend on a purely economic situation, without any political admixture. It will be necessary to see how by 1 July domestic inflation behaves, if we will be able to retain tariffs on the output of natural monopolies, what will the export dynamics be, and so forth. It will be very important to understand whether we have fully suppressed inflationary expectations on the currency market. If we are able to do all this by the summer, I do not rule out that the "currency corridor" can be replaced with some other alternative, for example, an "inclined corridor," when the Central Bank will regulate the currency rate in strict accordance with, or with a small difference with respect to, the dynamics of current inflation.

However, no matter what alternative is adopted after 1 July, I want to disappoint those who expect that the removal of the "currency corridor," allegedly, will bring about an immediate crash of the ruble and lead to the restoration of the previous "export Eldorado."

[Grishchenko] What is now the role of the former first deputy prime minister, Anatoliy Chubays, in the formation of the course of the Russian economy?

[Livshits] Chubays left the government, but not politics. He has good contacts with business, and he gives recommendations to many politicians, including the president's assistants.

[Grishchenko] And to you?

[Livshits] To me also. Incidentally, I receive recommendations from hundreds of people. Many telephone and offer not bad ideas. The coefficient of their utilization is approximately 20 percent. With regard to A. Chubays' presence in politics, it seems to me that, as before, it is perceptible and gives positive results because the advice of people of such qualification are always useful.

[Grishchenko] What do you think about the "economic" statements by RF Minister of Internal Affairs Gen. Anatoliy Kulikov?

[Livshits] Two of his topics seem to me very important. The first that expenditures on Chechnya's restoration can be only "spotty" and should be incurred where there are no military actions. Incidentally, the RF President also expressed such a point of view.

Second. I agree with General Kulikov: The problems with the financing of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are very serious. According to our evaluation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the only power structure for which an unrealistic budget was adopted. The problem is to find resources for additional financing for the department's needs. The minister is absolutely right here.

However, I cannot fail to admit that it is totally unclear to me why, following A. Kulikov's logic, for example, banks should be nationalized?

[Grishchenko] In your opinion, do Russian business circles, or some of them, trust the communists? This is now being discussed a great deal...

[Livshits] By no means all the representatives of business circles in the Russian Federation clearly visualize what the communists' victory in the June elections would mean for them. Nevertheless, I would conventionally divide Russian businessmen into three groups.

The first group is big business owning substantial property. Naturally, in this situation these circles fear primarily losses. True, according to our data, isolated cases of flirtation with the communists on the part of representatives of this group are observed. They include people who have become accustomed to always paying everyone in equal shares. They consider this to be a good policy: No matter who comes to power, I am a friend to everyone.

Entrepreneurs represent another group. In my opinion, these are people who do not care about anything. They operate with highly liquid assets. Simply speaking, their entire business is in a suitcase. They reason as follows: If there is stability, good. If instability comes, I take the suitcase and leave. I regard this group with an element of condescension bordering on contempt.

Finally, there also are people in business who would want the communists' victory. These are people who can survive only under conditions of rapid inflation. We have already discussed the party of inflation with you. This is its "economic program."

[Grishchenko] Which of these groups is the largest?

[Livshits] In its size the second is the largest stratum. Unfortunately, this group of businessmen is completely apolitical, so that it is unlikely that its position will seriously affect the results of the forthcoming elections. However, it will not reduce the risk zones either...

[Grishchenko] Taking into consideration the preelection tension and the grueling daily "battle for wages," do you have any free time? And if so, how do you spend it?

[Livshits] I consider myself lucky if I have a couple of Sundays a month. Now I feel the shortage of time in an especially acute manner. When I have the opportunity, I watch television, naturally, primarily information programs. I try to go to the theater at least once a month.

It seems to me that outside my work I lead a typical life for an assistant to the president. Many of my colleagues prefer to spend their free time, when they have it, in absolute seclusion, although we like each other very much. During their rare leisure hours, my colleagues read, play computer games, and, naturally, want to be in the family circle.

During moments of rest I try to carefully look over and analyze the press, especially everything that is connected with the economy and politics.

[Grishchenko] Therefore, INTERFAKS-AIF also gets to your table.

[Livshits] Of course. It seems to me that this young newspaper is becoming more serious and more informative. It has a good future because it relies on the Interfaks Agency, which, I think, does not need compliments.

Russia: Soskovets Urges Curb on Selling State Shareholdings

MM2304104696 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Don't Rush To Buy. Not on Sale Yet"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We need to abandon new shares-for-loans auctions of oil companies, and, moreover, we need to extend the period of the state shareholding in oil and other strategically important enterprises. That view was expressed to journalists by Russian Federation First Vice Premier Oleg Soskovets, who also stressed that the date on which current holders gain the right to sell state shareholdings, which falls 1 September, "must be deferred pending a special government decision" [...Soskovets, kotoryy takzhe podcherknul, chto srok nastupleniya prava realizatsii gospaketov aktsiy dlya nyneshnikh derzhateley, istekayushchiy 1 sentyabrya, "neobkhodimo prodlit do osobogo resheniya Pravitelstva"].

Russia: Soskovets Details Privatization 'Errors'

MM2404092096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Apr 96 pp 1, 2

[Article by First Vice Premier Oleg Soskovets: "Privatization: Working on the Errors"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no element of our reforms that plays on people's minds more than privatization. What results has it produced so far? What lessons must we learn from it?

The first stage of privatization mainly entailed a redistribution of property. Which explains its "breakneck" pace. In 1993 around 43,000 enterprises were privatized. If you compare January of that year with this January, there were seven times more enterprises privatized then.

The crazy pace gave rise to errors. I consider that the most important was the sale of enterprises at their book value, which had not been reviewed for a long time. It would often happen that enterprises would go for a price comparable to that of a new, exclusive apartment. The second mistake was that closed-type joint-stock companies were set up on the basis of privatized enterprises, even though they were created using public assets. And finally, the third mistake was to have an imperfect mechanism for managing state property.

We should perhaps resolve this particular problem today. At present Goskomimushchestvo [State Committee for the Management of State Property] appoints a state representative to the board of directors on the recommendation of the organ of executive power. But experience has shown such a system to be completely ineffective. One and the same person usually serves as a representative to three or more companies and cannot under these circumstances either resolve specific problems or determine industrial policy. A proposal was made at the recent session of the Association of Financial and Industrial Groups council that state representatives should work on the basis of trusteeship contracts. And each should work at only one enterprise. What a sound proposal!

Audits, which are a powerful means of monitoring directors, are supposed to play an important role in resolving the problems of state ownership. But what is happening at present? After the auctions had been held, the system of departmental monitoring was dismantled, enterprises were put at the disposal of directors, and the ministries were left without funds or staff.

Today some journalists like to label everyone who talks about defending state interests and ownership as reactionaries and conservatives. However, no one has yet abolished national and state interests.

A graphic example of this is found in our experience of the privatization of defense complex enterprises. The military-industrial complex' distinctive features were not taken into consideration. Moreover, a decidedly standardized approach was applied to the defense sector. The increased pace of the sale of shares determined their low value in advance. While the book value of property has increased more than a thousandfold, the price of shares compared to their face value has not increased more than thirtyfold. More than 80 percent of shares sold have ended up in the hands of companies that either do not want to or cannot invest in high-tech industries. On the other hand, they are able to block decisions to issue new shares to attract new capital.

At the first stage of privatization, the defense industry considered that it could survive only by splitting up into its constituent parts. This was the worst thing to do. Design offices are incapable of existing without a plant. Now a sobering-up process has taken place: It is time to create new, integrated structures. The Kompomash and Informatsionnyye Tekhnologii holding companies are being set up. Already in operation alongside these structures are such companies as Antey (military and refrigerator technology) and the Russian-Belarusian Vympel, which brings together Russian ABM defense science and Belarus' production base.

Arguments are raging about the status of defense complex enterprises. Some propose renationalizing the military-industrial complex. I think that here we need to study the experience of countries with market economies, where the state either buys or sells shares in enterprises, depending on the economic situation. Take France, for example. Even more interesting is the U.S. system, where there are no part-state-owned or state enterprises at all. But at the same time there is a fiercely competitive struggle for state orders and a system of monitoring their execution.

We still have to make the choice. But in the meantime a 13 April presidential edict created a Federal Commission To Guarantee Control Over the Management and Privatization of Defense Complex Facilities, which should change the situation in our military-industrial complex.

We should, of course, not now start taking things easy. The most difficult task will be to ensure a high return for the treasury from privatization on the one hand and to stimulate investment activity on the other. Unfortunately, Goskomimushchestvo has so far failed to give a clear outline for such a strategy or to to carry out properly the assignments of the Commission for Current Questions of Management, which constantly examines the problems associated with this "golden mean."

Unfortunately, since the stage of "wholesale" check privatization, we have succeeded neither in obtaining high returns for the treasury nor in attracting investment in manufacturing or in its modernization. Neither citizens' savings nor the financial structures' resources have been mobilized. The volume of foreign investment has even decreased.

We should decide immediately the fate of the shares which the state pledged the banks in 1995. Do you recall how many objections the snap auctions spawned back then? Everybody still remembers the passions surrounding Norilskiy Nikel, the Yukos oil company, and others. In connection with these pledges the problem arises of settling with the agent banks, which must be paid 1 September 1996.

The pledged shares include those of five major oil companies. But, you see, according to the list confirmed by the government, shares in these oil companies cannot be sold ahead of schedule. It is therefore necessary to extend the period after which the agents have the right to sell blocks of shares in the oil companies until a special decision is made by the government and to refrain from holding any shares-for-loans auctions for other oil companies during 1996, extending the period over which these and other strategically important enterprises' blocks of shares are assigned to the state. At the same time measures to control privatization deals need to be made tougher by making penalties for violations harsher.

The time has come to draw up documents that guarantee support for domestic commodity producers. After all, Russia is turning more and more into a raw materials supplier. The proportion of GDP represented by machine-building and agriculture has fallen sharply, while that represented by trade and the fuel and raw materials sectors has increased. But even the latter have gotten into a difficult position because we are not financing exploration work properly. It is essential to find additional money for these purposes. Otherwise, there will soon be nothing to extract.

As we can see, there are many problems. We must once more draw the attention of Goskomimushchestvo and the Economy Ministry to the necessity of expediting the resolution of fundamental questions of privatization here, while not forgetting the lessons of recent years.

Russia: Crisis in Defense Industry Seen Deepening

MK2404112896 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Yuliya Latynina under the "Defense Industry" rubric: "Crisis of the Russian Defense Industry Deepens. Defense Enterprises Owe 3 Trillion to the Treasury"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The defense enterprises' performance in the first three months of this year confirms a deepening of the crisis in the Russian military-industrial sector. According to Vitaliy Vitebskiy, deputy chief of the Economy Department of the State Defense Industry Committee, the overall production volume of Russian defense industry enterprises was 69.7 percent last month against March 1995. Only the Voronezh-based "Energiya" Science and Production Association reported 14.6-percent growth. In March 1996, aircraft production at these enterprises was 67.6 percent of last March's level; radio industry production, 64.7 percent; electronics, 65 percent; ammunition, 61 percent. In March 1996 civilian production at plants under the State Defense Industry Committee's jurisdiction fell to 70.4 percent — and military production, to 68.4 percent against March 1995.

The press service of the State Defense Industry Committee reported that the defense enterprises' debt to the treasury has exceeded 3 trillion rubles [R]. At the same time, as of 10 March, the state's arrears in back wages were R1.5 trillion — and in the payment for defense orders, R4.8 trillion.

The defense industry's work force shrank by 14.1 percent in February 1996 against the same period of 1995. Meanwhile, the average monthly wage did not exceed R490,000 per person (ranging from R345,000 in the electronic industry to R670,000 in the shipbuilding industry).

The practice of building closed towns or enterprises, forming urban centers where over an 80 percent share [of the economy] was produced by defense orders, has brought about a disastrous social situation after the total defense order was cut by many times back in 1992. In such cities as Arsenyev (the birthplace of the "black sharks" — K-50 helicopters) or Severodvinsk (nuclear submarines), the actual unemployment rate is more than 60 percent.

The 1995 budget earmarked R1.4 trillion to finance five federal conversion programs. In fact, only R250 billion have been released.

At the same time, the question of privatizing, not just converting, defense enterprises to civilian use remains one of the most controversial issues. A considerable number of plants would like to remain under state ownership. And the State Defense Committee has pointed to the purchase of shares in the "Saturn" joint-stock company or the Moscow Helicopter Plant by foreigners through Russian legal entities as impermissible examples.

Russia: Government Panel Views Oil Production Decline

MM2204155196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA ("Business in Russia" section) in Russian 22 Apr 96 pp 5-6

[Article by Vladimir Kucherenko: "Oil as a Factor in National Security"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite the slowdown in the decline in extraction rates (3.5 percent in 1995 as against 10.2 percent the previous year), the situation is alarming. According to the most optimistic forecasts from the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, by the year 2000 it may be possible to keep the extraction level within 285-295 million tonnes a year (the 1990 figure was 516 million tonnes). However, a further sharp decline cannot be ruled out.

These figures were cited at a session of the Government Commission for Operational Questions which discussed measures to stabilize oil extraction in Russia.

The decline in prospecting for new oil reserves and in test drilling threatens to become the cause of a reduction in extraction. Test drilling has declined by more than two-thirds since 1991 (from 4.1 to 1.24 million meters in 1996), reaching the levels of the 1950's. The growth of oil reserves shrank from 810 million tonnes in the year before the reforms to 150 million tonnes last year. Geological prospecting work in promising new territories — East Siberia and the Arctic and Far East continental shelves — is practically at a standstill..

In the words of Roskomnedr [Russian Federation Committee for Geology and the Use of Natural Resources] Chief V. Orlov, there is an immutable normative: Prospecting — the growth of reserves — must exceed extraction levels by 150 percent. This rule started to be broken in 1989, and by 1991 the growth of reserves equaled 206 percent of the level of extraction. Last year's results showed this figure struggling to reach 65 percent. And the amount of deep drilling come to a mere one-third of the 1991 figure.

The reasons? The state has stopped financing the geologists out of the treasury, providing only 6 percent of the planned appropriations last year. And the big oil companies' resources for prospecting purposes have been decentralized and become fragmented.

As a result we are witnessing the intensive depletion of deposits, which are being operated on the "live now, pay later" principle. Roskomnedr warns that oil producers in the Ural-Volga and North Caucasus zones, where deposits are 70 percent exhausted and the oil contains a high percentage of water, can no longer increase extraction.

West Siberia, with its Tyumen and Samotlor fields, also needs emergency measures to save the raw material base — the depletion level of resources there has been calculated at 34.4 percent. On average Russia's "black gold" deposits are 44.3 percent depleted.

Level of Depletion of Russia's Biggest Oil Fields	Percent
Samotlor	64
Fedorovskoye	60
Mamontovka	79
Romashkinskoye	85.4
Tuymezinskoye	90

If this situation persists in the next few years, by the beginning of the next millennium the volume of oil extraction in the country could fall to 147-150 million tonnes. Which would plunge us into the most severe crisis. For the Russian Federation Ministry of Fuel and Energy has calculated the minimum oil extraction levels acceptable for Russia — 241 million tonnes according to the optimistic forecast and 259 million according to the pessimistic forecast. If the rate of decline of "black gold" extraction remains at last year's level, crisis point could be reached somewhere between 1997 and 1999.

The price would be inordinate. You see, food supplies for the big cities, the stability of the consumer market (where imports for petrodollars predominate), and the stability of the ruble on the foreign currency exchanges all depend at this time on oil extraction. Not to mention heat supplies, the provisioning of the Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Russia's levers of influence in the international arena. A sharp decline in oil extraction when the country is highly dependent on imported goods could encourage separatist processes and a struggle for shrinking sources of petrodollars and fuel.

The situation can be rectified. In the words of Roskomnedr Chairman V. Orlov, there are promising and as yet poorly prospected zones in the Western Urals and the Northwest Caucasus (Chechnya). In the Moscow syneclise and the Mezenskaya zone. Prospecting levels are low in Yakutia, Eastern Siberia, and the Arctic and Far East continental shelves. Reserves of 14.5 billion tonnes of oil are concentrated on the

Barents and Kara Sea coasts alone. Although the "easy" oil of the sixties and seventies cannot be expected.

First Vice Premier O. Soskovets described the questions arising in this sphere as a matter of national security. On his instructions a check of the Sidanko and Lukoil oil companies will be carried out — into their involvement in prospecting work. It is proposed that a mechanism be worked out to centralize compulsory "geological" payments out of the profits of oil producers in big corporations. But O. Soskovets proposed that the priority areas for the development of the country's fuel and energy complex should be opening up the Timano-Pechora field and South Sakhalin, modernizing Samotlor, and developing southern Tyumen. Because without broadening the base the commissioning of previously shut-down wells will only accelerate the depletion of old reserves.

Furthermore, in 1995 the Expert Commission under the country's government approved a concept for opening up the Barents Sea oil and gas province. The precise intention is that it should compensate for the decline in extraction in West Siberia.

As V. Bushuyev, Russian Federation deputy minister of fuel and energy, considers, his department could acquire all the levers necessary for normalization, getting real control of the state holdings in the oil companies. In his words, tough planned rules for the correlation between operating and prospected reserves must be introduced as part of a unified strategy for Russia's energy security.

V. Bushuyev also notes the poor work on energy saving being done in the country. Because energy consumption per unit of output is an average of 40 percent higher in the Russian Federation than it was in the USSR, which was a model of waste, At a time when we are only a couple of steps away from an energy crisis, this would cost us too dear.

Main Points of Commission for Operational Questions Decisions

— Draft decisions are to be formulated on extending the duration of the retention of oil company shares in federal ownership.

— The Ministry of Finance is to submit by 15 May proposals on the purchase by the state of oil company shares previously held as surety by banks.

— When the Tax Code is being formulated a mechanism is to be devised for levying excise duties to cream off the additional profits of companies operating fields with the best geological conditions.

— The volume of prospecting work and growth of oil reserves is to be increased to 600-700 million tonnes a year.

— Proceeds from exports of oil by geological prospecting structures, irrespective of form of ownership, are to be used for geological purposes.

— To boost enterprises' interest in opening up new fields, the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, the Ministry of the Economy, and Roskomnedr are preparing a list of such fields being commissioned in 1996-2000. Indicating the extraction levels, broken down by year, on achieving which enterprises will receive the right to encourage [as published] the industrial opening up of new deposits.

— The Ministry of Fuel and Energy and the inderpartmental commission for settling questions linked with the utilization of main pipelines and port terminals for exporting oil must examine the Russian Federation State Technical Commission proposal that priority entitlement to use of the "pipe" be granted to oil companies and special design bureaus whose proceeds have to go into the stabilization of oil extraction.

Russia: Gold Mining, Reserves Policies Reviewed

964F1877A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian Apr 96 No 16, p 13

[Article by Sergey Kalinin: "Why Our Gold Is the 'Most Golden' in the World"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the opinion of scientists, in the past 3,000 years, mankind has mined around 100,000 tonnes of gold (the weight of two Ostankino television towers). A certain part was irretrievably lost, some has been preserved in museums, but the greatest part of this treasure rests today in state storage facilities, in safes of major world banks, and in the possession of private owners. For many centuries, this "coveted" metal has not lost its value, but even today remains as a measure of wealth and power, and those who have large quantities of it still rule countries and peoples.

The Reserve Does Not Strain the Pocket

Let us take, for example, the United States, whose gold reserve is estimated to be 8,500 tonnes, and is the largest in the world. It is carefully guarded by the U.S. Federal Reserve System in Fort Knox. A like amount is held in the safes of the International Monetary Fund, which is located in New York. Germany owns 2,875 tonnes, Switzerland—2,590 tonnes, France—2,545 tonnes, and Japan—753 tonnes.

Some sources maintain that, in better times, the gold reserve of the USSR reached up to 3,000 tonnes.

However, it is impossible to verify these data, since such information has been secret for the entire existence of the Soviet Union. As of January 1996 (according to information obtained from Roskomdragmet [Russian Federation Committee on Precious Metals and Precious Stones]), the gold reserve of Russia comprised 340 tonnes. Frankly speaking, that is not much, if we recall that by natural reserves of this precious metal we occupy third place after the RSA [Republic of South Africa] and the United States and that there were over 10,000 tonnes of it mined in Russia in the 20th century alone.

Comparing the last two figures, one cannot help but begin to believe in the "special" path of Russia, with its endless political and economic experiments, up to the present day. After the civil war, gold and precious metals were sold to combat the ruin and famine, and then—for the industrial thrust into a bright future. During the Great Patriotic War, we paid the Americans in gold for their lend-lease shipments. During the crop failures of 1961-62, we avoided bread lines by once again bankrupting the state treasury. In the late 1970's, gold in huge quantities was used to buy equipment for developing the oil fields in Western Siberia. In recent times, the United States has also been selling about 200 tonnes of gold annually, but their gold reserve is not being depleted so rapidly.

For Every Sixth Sister—a Set of Earrings

In the early 1980's in the USSR, up to 60 tonnes of gold were processed annually for the needs of the jewelry industry, with only 26 narrowly specialized enterprises engaging in this. In Bronnitsy, a suburb of Moscow, for example, there was the only plant for making gold chains in the entire Union. Perhaps many still remember that this product at that time was one of the goods that were in extremely short supply. The primary buyers of jewelry during those years were the residents of the republics of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.

Since that time, the production of jewelry goods has declined by five times. Last year in Russia, only 10 tonnes of gold were used for their manufacture. As they say, a holy place is not empty for long, and, therefore, this gap is being filled by numerous foreign firms, with considerable profit to themselves. Thanks primarily to them, one in every six women in Russia has been able to adorn herself with a ring, a set of earrings, or a chain. According to the data of the VNII [All-Russia Scientific-Research Institute] of Yuvelirprom, the most popular among our fellow countrywomen are lightweight goods of 585 assay, weighing 1-4 grams (in 1995 there were 5 million such pieces sold). In Western Europe there is one piece of jewelry for every fifth woman, but they prefer more expensive products.

The relative share of export of jewelry adornments from Russia is inconsequently small and is estimated at only $10 million per year. The leading place in gold processing, however, belongs to Italy. On the Alennine Peninsula, they process around 500 tonnes of metal into jewelry—almost one-fourth of the world's mining.

Soon There Will Be No One To Tax

Since 1993, a persistent tendency toward reduction of gold mining has been outlined in Russia. Last season too, only 123 tonnes of gold were mined (according to Roskomdragmet data), which is 10 tonnes less than in 1994. Goskomstat [State Committee on Statistics] cites an even lower figure—111 tonnes. According to optimistic predictions, if such rates of decline are retained, already in 13 years the mining of gold in Russia on an industrial scale may cease. Pessimists, however, believe that this will happen much sooner.

In previous years, the Soviet state bought up all of the precious metal, down to the last gram, from its miners at the price set for them. In exchange, it generously subsidized and protected its favorite "chicken that laid the golden eggs." During the war, Stalin personally controlled the state of affairs in the sector. Yet the current government, which has rejected subsidies, has nevertheless in essence reserved its monopoly right to dispose of the gold.

Well, so be it. The state does not give anything in return, but it even takes the very last bit. In Russia for the present day, the highest maximal rate of pay for use of mineral resources is up to 10 percent of the volume of mined gold (in the world this rate is one-two percent). The total payments and taxes to budgets of various levels exceed 50 percent of the proceeds received from the gold that is sold. Even in more developed countries with favorable climatic conditions, mining companies pay the state a maximum of 35 percent, and not from the total sale, but only from the profits.

Aside from the taxes, the direct expenditures for mining the gold are also increasing, despite the fact that its procurement price is remaining practically unchanged. Just since the beginning of the current year, the cost of energy, fuel, materials and equipment has increased by 25 percent. In the years of stagnation, the most ordinary domestic-made bulldozer cost the miner 1 kilogram of gold. Today prospectors are forced to pay over 10 kilograms for it! Many gold mining enterprises found themselves bankrupt, according to the results for 1995.

In order to save the sector and make its products competitive, we do not have to make any great discoveries. It is enough simply to familiarize ourselves with the experience of the countries that are very successful in this endeavor. In the early 1980's, few perceived Australia as a serious competitor (only 25 tonnes of gold per year). However, the preferential regimen of taxation, which exempted mining companies from taxes on profits and payments for mineral resources for several years, allowed it to become one of the world leaders, with an annual indicator of 250 tonnes.

The situation is today developing according to a similar scenario in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Papua-New Guinea. Naturally, foreign investors give preference to them and to the countries of the CIS (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), but not to Russia.

Among the unfavorable factors that do not facilitate an influx of foreign capital into Russia is the geographic location of the primary gold-bearing regions (remote and cold Kolyma, Chukotka, and Yakutiya), requiring additional capital expenditures for development of the infrastructure and operational and transport expenditures. Moreover, the number of gold deposits discovered at the present time in other countries is fully adequate to satisfy the planet's demands for many years to come.

Will There Be Enough Gold for the Commercial Banks?

In general, the world can get along quite well without our gold. But can our gold producers get out of the crisis situation by themselves? The chairman of the Union of Gold Industrialists, Valeriy Brayko, gives a positive answer to this question:

"To start with, we must review the tax policy, create a real market in precious metals, and not one declared in words and on paper. Then not only foreign, but also domestic banks will begin to invest money in development of the sector."

It is true, in November of last year the RF [Russian Federation] Government and the State Duma adopted documents on development of the market in precious metals and precious stones. Specifically, they stated that the state monopoly on gold and diamond mining must be eliminated and that the state retains the right only to priority acquisition. But for the present time this is all still theory, while in practice the situation is quite different.

The government has set a quota on gold mining in the amount of 145 tonnes for 1996. Of this, 131 tonnes must go to the state fund, while the remaining 14 tonnes may be sold to commercial banks. But will enough gold be mined so that there will be any left over for unrestricted sale? And, even if everything works out favorably, will the 150 commercial banks that have licenses to buy gold want to buy it? After all, they do not have the right to export the gold abroad or to perform security deposit operations with it. And within the country, gold does not have much liquidity at the present time.

And how can we speak of any market, if Russia does not have a precious metals exchange and the effective criminal legislation provides penalties for owning a gold ingot or unfaceted diamond? Up until the present time, our refining plants cast primarily only standard bank ingots weighing from 12 to 13 kilograms, intended for large-scale interstate accounting operations.

Not too long ago, Viktor Chernomyrdin was shown experimental samples of ingots of various weights—ranging from 1 gram to 1 kilogram—at Roskomdragmet. Most likely, if the order is given to begin large-scale casting of this "small change," then it will be intended for small banks and primary buyers, that is you and me. And this means that... But let us not get ahead of ourselves. Time will tell.

International Affairs

Ukraine: Kuchma in Strasbourg Cited on Relations With Russia

LD2304122896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1030 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — "We are adhering strictly to the course of ensuring that the strategic partnership with Russia will be based in the future on the principles of respect for state sovereignty, noninterference in internal affairs, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders", said Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma at the plenary session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, commenting on the state of Russian-Ukrainian relations.

According to Kuchma, Ukraine sees in that an important factor of regional stability in Eastern Europe — an essential element in the make-up of continental security, a UNIAN special correspondent reports.

Ukraine: Kuchma Calls For 'Evolutionary' NATO Expansion

LD2304123796 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — "Ukraine attaches great importance to the development of closer relations with NATO and the Western European Union," Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma told a session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.

The Ukrainian leader said that, in view of the present situation in Europe, Ukraine is seeking its own road toward NATO. "Ukraine does not oppose NATO's expansion, but sees it as an evolutionary and open process which should not recreate confrontation," the president stressed. He said that Ukraine sees NATO's future as a gradual transformation "from a defense alliance into a Euroatlantic security structure embracing all European countries."

The Ukrainian president stressed that the creation of a nuclear-free zone in this region would have a major stabilizing effect on European development in every aspect, including the politico-military one, as was pointed out at the G-7 summit in Moscow. "While drafting a future European security system, we should take into account the interests of nonaligned neutral countries such as Ukraine," Kuchma said. According to the Ukrainian president, a continental security system would be doomed to failure if such countries were to end up in a so-called buffer zone. He called for an effective mechanism to guarantee the security of nonaligned nations.

President Kuchma emphasized that Ukraine's role and position in Europe, its neutral policy being crucial for the prevention of a new confrontation, demand that Ukraine's interests be most thoroughly considered.

Ukraine: Kuchma on Cooperation With OSCE Over Crimean Autonomy Issue

LD2304163996 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — "Ukraine supports the gradual increase of the role and impact of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE], a unique tool in preventive diplomacy, settlement of critical situations and, elimination of their after-effects," Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma told a session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

In his address to the assembly, President Kuchma said that Ukraine is cooperating with the OSCE in the process of defining the extent of Crimean autonomy. He described this as a sign of Ukraine's "sincerity and openness in a bid to counter separatist attempts in Crimea and abroad to exaggerate externally imposed problems out of all proportion."

Kuchma dismissed "groundless and irresponsible" appeals, including those made to the Council of Europe, about the alleged "absence of any autonomous rights in Crimea." The president expressed confidence that nobody in Europe is keen to see "Crimean separatism creating a precedent for similar movements in other autonomous regions within European countries."

The Ukrainian president said that negotiations on Crimea's autonomous status are nearing successful completion in accordance with the active Ukrainian legislation and the Ukrainian constitution. Kuchma said Crimea will definitely receive autonomous status within a unitary Ukrainian state whose territorial integrity must be preserved.

Ukraine: Kuchma Asks For Help in Repatriation of Crimean Tatars

LD2304164996 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — In his address to a session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, President Leonid Kuchma called for international assistance to Ukraine in the repatriation of formerly deported ethnic minorities.

Kuchma said 250,000 Crimean Tatars had already returned to Ukraine and about twice as many former residents wished to resettle from CIS countries. A further 17,000 formerly deported Bulgarians and Armenians, 20,000 Greeks and 15,000 Germans are also waiting to return. "We bear no moral responsibility for the crimes against these peoples, but we have been left alone to deal with the problem," the Ukrainian president said.

About $2 billion is required to resettle the formerly deported minorities, while Ukraine is able to provide only 100 million. This has considerable slowed down repatriation, and Ukraine needs international help to revive the process, Kuchma said.

Ukraine: Kuchma on Independence, Ties With Russia, NATO

LD2304172996 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1440 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strasbourg — Replying to parliamentarians' questions at a sitting of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma stressed that the signing of the treaty between Belarus and Russia on the creation of a Community of Sovereign Republics will not affect Ukraine's course of strengthening its independence. "The people of Ukraine chose their path in the referendum and will continue to follow it," he said.

According to a UNIAN special correspondent, Leonid Kuchma emphasized at the same time that Ukraine will actively cooperate with neighboring countries on the basis of equitable partnership, considering the creation of suprastate structures "such as those stipulated in the treaty between Russia and Belarus" to be impossible.

Leonid Kuchma believes that plans to revive the USSR or create new structures of this type have no prospects and that they "are not working."

Expressing his opinion on the Chechen conflict, the Ukrainian president noted that Ukraine favors the territorial integrity of any state. At the same time, according to him, it does not support the measures which Russia is using to achieve its aim. Leonid Kuchma said he was in favor of the soonest possible peaceful settlement of the Chechen problem.

The Ukrainian president stressed the necessity of observing the Helsinki accords of 1975 when resolving problems arising on the way to signing a comprehensive treaty between Ukraine and Romania. "We cannot infringe on Europe's existing structure," he noted.

The head of the Ukrainian state said he is convinced that the Black Sea Fleet problem will definitely be resolved as soon as the issue of Sevastopol is resolved. The status and conditions for basing the Russian Black Sea Fleet are the main thing in this problem, he noted.

Expressing his opinion on NATO expansion, Leonid Kuchma said he is in favor of only democratic states without territorial claims becoming new members of the alliance. He also stressed that there should be no new split of Europe into two blocs, so that a new Berlin Wall cannot be built. "This should be avoided and the process of NATO expansion should occur taking into account the interests of all states, including Russia," Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma emphasized.

Ukraine: Kuchma Addresses Europe Assembly on Issues

LD2304190096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1552 GMT 23 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Kuchma spoke at the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Tuesday. Ukraine was admitted to the CE on November 9, 1995. Presidential Bulletin publishes a detailed account of Kuchma's speech and his replies to questions asked by European Parliament members.

"Independence, people's prosperity and efforts to built a society and state as a democratic system are Ukraine's priorities in domestic policies," President Kuchma said.

He recalled that Ukraine was one of the last to "free itself from a colonial regime and join other European nations who ditched Communism." Ukraine thereby made its "final choice," President Kuchma said.

At the same time the Ukrainian leader said that the constitutional problem in the country remained unresolved. He said that as the head of state he would do everything in his powers to ensure that a new Ukrainian Constitution as a fundamental law of freedom and democracy should be adopted in the near future.

He also explained how he saw a future procedure of adopting a new constitution: "An agreement between the president and parliament and popular vote in a referendum would guarantee the highest legitimacy of a new constitution." IF Note: Before flying to Strasbourg on Monday Kuchma met with the leaders of Ukrainian parliamentary factions and groups of deputies and discussed the possibility of speeding up the constitutional process.

According to the presidential press-service, the lawmakers representing most parliamentary groups and factions voted for an early first reading of the constitution by parliament. The presidential press-service recalls that an inter-factional conciliatory commission had finalized a draft constitution already.

As he reviewed the social and political situation in Ukraine, President Kuchma said that democratic reforms were continuing in the context of a sharp confrontation of political ideas.

President Kuchma recalled Ukraine's commitments made after its admission in the Council of Europe and said that many commitments drew a mixed response from society, including political forces and state structures. For instance, he said that the problem of capital punishment sparked vigorous debates and the idea of its abolition was rejected by part of society.

"We are aware, though, that international legal commitments will be international legal commitments and have to be honored," President Kuchma said. This means that Ukraine will stick to the agreements stemming from its membership of the Council of Europe.

Kuchma paid special attention to the problem of accommodating the deported peoples returning to Ukraine. He said that his country bore no moral responsibility for the crimes committed by the totalitarian regime against those peoples and asked for international assistance in accommodating the migrants.

The Ukrainian leader called on the PACE members to speed up the ratification by their parliaments of the agreements of partnership and cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union, signed in 1994. "Our strategic goal is to become a full-fledged member of the European Union," Kuchma said.

As he dwelt on the problem of European Security, President Kuchma said that at this point it would make sense to get back to the idea of a political and economic association in Central and Eastern Europe of states seeking integration with European structures. He suggested creating a nuclear arms free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

About NATO's expansion Kuchma said that Kiev saw it as a "gradual, evolutionary and open process that would cause no confrontation or conflicts."

Ukraine sees future NATO as a purely defensive Euroatlantic structure of security for all European countries.

Kuchma spoke highly of the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a "unique instrument of preventive diplomacy, the settlement of critical situations and elimination of their effects."

Kuchma recalled that Ukraine cooperated closely with the OSCE on the problem of Crimean autonomy. In that connection he said that Crimea's autonomous status was about to be settled in keeping with the current legislation and the Ukrainian constitution.

The Ukrainian President told the European parliament members that Crimea would be guaranteed the status of an autonomy within the unitarian Ukrainian state, whose territorial integrity must be preserved.

Kuchma is certain that nobody in Europe is interested in what he described as Crimea separatism to create a precedent for those European countries where there are autonomies, too.

About relations with Russia Kuchma said that they must be based on respect for state sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs and the inviolability of borders. Kuchma said that Kiev strictly adhered to the policy of strategic partnership with Moscow within the framework of those principles.

"In general the domestic situation in Ukraine and its international position are a good reason for optimism and for continuing along the chosen road," Kuchma said.

As he answered questions by European parliament members after his address, President Kuchma said that the CIS as a union of former Soviet republics failed to work.

"All future formations consisting of former Soviet republics would have the same results as the CIS," Kuchma said.

At the same time he believes it was an integral right of Russia and Belarus to form a community.

As for Ukraine, President Kuchma said that it made its choice in December 1991 in a referendum, when the people voted for an independent sovereign state.

Kuchma pointed out that Ukraine was against establishing a supra-national structures. However, he pointed out that Russia and Belarus were neighbors interested in equitable partnership.

Asked about his attitude to Chechnya, Kuchma said that he supported President Yeltsin's policy of resolving the Chechen problem by peaceful means. At the same time he said that he did not support measures currently being used in a bid to settle the situation in Chechnya.

Ukraine, Kuchma said, proceeded from the principle of Russia's territorial integrity.

The Ukrainian leader said that the Russian State Duma's March decision to denounce the Belovezhye Accord was of no significance to Ukraine from the legal point of view.

Asked about the chances of settling the Black Sea Fleet dispute Kuchma said he was certain that a solution would be found proceeding from the interests of Ukraine, but without forgetting the interests of Russia."

He said there had been progress in Black Sea Fleet talks with Russia. The problem of deploying the Russian fleet in Crimea had been lifted, however, the question of stationing it in Sevastopol remained. Kuchma confessed that on that issue there was no progress, because it concerned the question of Ukraine territory.

Ukraine, Kuchma said confirmed that the chief base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet can be in Sevastopol, whereas Russia argues that Sevastopol is the base of the Black Sea Fleet. "Ukraine will never agree to that formula," Kuchma said.

At the same time he came out for cooperation with Moscow on an equitable basis.

Asked by a Romanian member of the European parliament about the Ukrainian-Romanian territorial dispute over the island of Zmeiny, Kuchma confirmed that Ukraine was against any territorial claims that would change borders in Europe.

He also said that normalization in relations between Ukraine and Romania was possible on the basis of taking into account resolutions by all post-war conferences, starting from the Helsinki conference.

Kuchma dismissed references made by the Romanian European parliament member to some secret articles of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact some nationalist Romanian politicians used to support the idea of redrawing borders in Europe. "I have some pacts to recall, too," the Ukrainian president retorted but would not specify what pacts he had in mind.

At the same time Kuchma said that he was certain that Ukrainian-Romanian relations would improve. IF Note: some experts believe that Kuchma must have had in mind the Hitler-Antonescu treaty. Under that agreement Romania participated in the war against the USSR.

As he commented on Kuchma's speech at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the assembly's Vice-President Boris Oleinik, of Ukraine, said that it was "convincing."

Interviewed in Strasbourg, Oleinik said that the President had answered all questions that worried the deputies. "I believe that the European parliament's members were fully satisfied by President Kuchma's speech," Oleinik said.

He also supported President Kuchma's attitude to the community formed by Russia and Belarus. "We should not meddle in their internal affairs," Oleinik said and added that "we have our own concept of development." At the same time he pointed out that an independent way of development by no means implied isolation from neighboring countries.

Oleinik said that the agenda of the PACE session contained the problem of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. "Everybody must understand that the Chernobyl disaster is not a problem of Ukraine, Russia or Belarus. It is a problem of the whole of Europe," Oleinik said.

Ukraine: Orthodox Church Willing To Mediate in Chechen Talks

LD2304162196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1440 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev patriarchy, is willing to take part in peace talks on settling the Russian-Chechen conflict, Patriarch Filaret said at a news conference on 23 April. According to him, this was decided in response to a message with this proposal by the leadership of Region No 6 of the Republic of Ichkeria.

Patriarch Filaret stressed that "the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev Patriarchy, does not intend to become a supporter of either political side in the Chechen conflict. The Kiev patriarchy desires to halt the unchristian bloodshed in that region and is guided not by political self-seeking, but by Christian duty."

The patriarch said he hoped the talks on resolving the Chechen issue will be held in the near future. According to him, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev patriarchy, will form a special delegation for direct participation in the peace talks.

Roman Koval, head of the State Independence of Ukraine association; Pavlo Movchan, head of the Enlightenment society; Ivan Drach, head of the Congress of Ukrainian Intelligentsia; and representatives from the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, who intend to join the delegation, have voiced their support for the church's peacemaking mission.

Ukraine: Dniester Delegation Visits for 'Confidential' Talks

AU2304123496 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 20 Apr 96 p 8

[Report by HOLOS UKRAYINY correspondent Anatoliy Martsynovskyy: The Roads From Chisinau and Tiraspol Have Crossed in Kiev"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *The day before yesterday [18 April], an uncommon, though not widely publicized event took place in Kiev: A delegation of the self-proclaimed Dniester Moldovan Republic headed by Secretary of State Valeriy Litskaya visited Kiev.*

However, the meeting appears to have been perfectly natural, if one recalls the February visit to Moldova by Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko and the course toward a more active participation in resolving the Dniester problem that was proclaimed by Ukraine. The particulars of the present negotiations in Kiev are not known: K. Hryshchenko refused to brief journalists on them, having pointed out that the talks had been "quite confidential." Still, it is known from some sources that at the meeting between Moldovan President Mircea Snegur and Dniester Region President Igor Smirnov planned for 24 April, radical changes may be achieved in the Dniester settlement. It appears, therefore, that the visit by the Dniester officials is a kind of preparation (or consultation) for this important round of talks between Chisinau and Tiraspol.

Also quite telling and even somewhat sensational is the fact that the Dniester delegation visited the Moldovan Embassy in Kiev. It is also interesting and, perhaps, symbolic that, concurrently with the Dniester representatives, a Moldovan governmental delegation, headed by Vice Prime Minister Valentin Kunev stayed in Kiev: A joint Ukrainian-Moldovan Commission for Economic Issues held a session (the Ukrainian delegation in it is headed by Vice Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh). "We work along two lines" — this is how Kostyantyn Hryshchenko commented upon this fact.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Nationalists Accuse Ministry Structure of Antistate Goals

AU2404092596 Kiev NESKORENA NATSIYA in Ukrainian 3 Apr 96 p 2

[Statement by the Press Service of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Ukraine]

[FBIS Translated Text] By an order of Ukraine's Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov issued on 25 November 1995, a clandestine headquarters was created at the Ministry of Defense. Its objective is to draft and implement a plan to destroy Ukraine's defense system and liquidate the sovereign Ukrainian state itself.

The members of this clandestine anti-Ukrainian and antistate headquarters, hiding in Pushcha-Vodytsya [near Kiev], secretly developed their scheme for the systematic destruction of the army. The chief of General Staff had no knowledge of this. Under the cover of so-called reforms, they started to implement it.

Major General Leonid Vasylyovych Kravchuk, first deputy chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces Academy, revealed this on 3 February.

It was Colonel General Anatoliy Lopata, chief of the General Staff, who revealed the information about the creation and activities of the clandestine antistate headquarters. For doing that, Defense Minister Shmarov dismissed him. The secret plan envisages, in particular, liquidation of the command structures of two military districts and other military structures and formations that were established over many years and on which much money was spent. This may be interpreted as the first step toward destruction of the defense system that Ukraine has created with such difficulty over the past four years. According to Leonid Kravchuk, some chiefs of the Defense Ministry Main Directorate were given very little time to read the project drafted by the clandestine headquarters and were then ordered to sign it. Refusal would have entailed very serious sanctions. Unfortunately, there were quite a number of generals ready to sign any document for the sake of maintaining their privileges. Ukrainian officers and patriotic generals regard the creation of this illegal structure within one of the power ministries as an attempt at a military coup aimed at the total destruction of the state's defense system and then the liquidation of its sovereignty. Major General Kravchuk called upon the officers corps to take all steps to force the Defense Ministry Collegium to resign en masse for the attempt to undermine the state's defense capability, for the unsatisfactory combat readiness of the army, and the inability to focus its efforts on the immediate tasks of defense.

The main demands of the participants in the conference on the problems of building the Ukrainian National Army include the immediate dissolution of the military collegium, reevaluation of the officers corps, the return of Kostyantyn Morozov [former defense minister] and Volodymyr Mulyava [former military chief in charge of servicemen's patriotic indoctrination] to their posts at the Defense Ministry and the revision of those international agreements that do not accord with Ukraine's national interests.

Ukraine: Cabinet Approves Program For Handling Radioactive Waste

LD2304142996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1138 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, April 23, (Interfax-Ukraine) — The Presidium of the Cabinet of Ministers approved on Monday the draft State Program for the handling of radioactive wastes in Ukraine for 1996-2000 and until 2005, and a draft resolution on this issue.

According to the draft, the Government's press service has told IF-U, the Chernobyl Aftermath Ministry shall be in control of this field.

The adoption of the State Program will make it possible to coordinate the efforts of all those dealing with radioactive wastes and take up the task of providing a systematic storage and elimination of the wastes. The continuous accumulation of radioactive wastes not only at NPPs, but also at enterprises, at health-care and research institutions creates the conditions for radiation accidents, the press service noted.

In addition, the Program envisages measures to transform the site "Cover" (ferro-concrete sarcophagus over Power Unit 4 at Chernobyl NPP, where the accident happened on April 26, 1986 - IF-U) into an environmentally safe system, which will be an important part of efforts to eliminate the Chernobyl aftermath.

In view of the country's hard economic situation, a special State Fund will be set up for the treatment of radioactive wastes. The Fund, formed of deductions from the budgets of waste-producing plants, will be used to bury and annihilate the wastes.

Ukraine: Environment Minister Does Not Rule Out New Chernobyl Leak

BR2404122096 Stockholm DAGENS NYHETER in Swedish 21 Apr 96 p A 6

[Interview with Ukrainian Environmental Protection Minister Yuriy Kostenko by Michael Winiarski in Kiev; date not given: "Not Only Ukraine's Problem"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — "Everybody asks if we are going to close down Chernobyl by the year 2000. My answer is that it is not that simple and that a joint effort from the whole world is needed. This is not only Ukraine's problem," Ukrainian Environment Minister Yuriy Kostenko said in an interview with DAGENS NYHETER.

Kostenko especially cautioned that the so-called sarcophagus, the concrete shell that encases the wrecked reactor, is not a guarantee against new radioactive emissions.

On a few occasions Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has said that he is prepared to close Chernobyl by the turn of the century. In a meeting with G-7 leaders in December 1995 Kuchma more or less promised that Chernobyl would be closed. But Ukraine lays down very firm conditions for this to take place as early as the year 2000.

The Kiev government demands that the world's richest countries step in and pay nearly $5-6 billion which supposedly is the cost of a closedown and to cover the resulting loss of electric power.

[Winiarski] Is this a form of blackmail that Ukraine is conducting against the West: Pay, otherwise we will not close it?

[Kostenko] The negotiations have only started. The outcome depends on the compensation that Ukraine gets. In the memorandum signed at the G-7 meeting in December neither an amount nor a date was specified.

But just to stop operations would take 80-85 months and cost billions of dollars. And that is still the least of our worries. The overshadowing problem is the fourth reactor which is inside the sarcophagus.

[Winiarski] Has a decision already been reached regarding Chernobyl's future?

[Kostenko] Our position is unchanged. We are prepared to close it on the condition that we are compensated for the social, energy, and technical costs which would result from a closedown. There are 6,000 people working at the plant and Ukraine gets 6 percent of its electrical energy from the Chernobyl plant which must be replaced.

But the question is not only closing or not closing. In any event it must become a safe plant. There are 200 tonnes of nuclear fuel in Chernobyl. And who knows if there could be a new eruption of nuclear energy?

[Winiarski] How great is the risk for a nuclear reaction in the sarcophagus?

[Kostenko] We must first establish how much concentrated nuclear fuel is inside the sarcophagus. During these 10 years things have happened, but we do not know exactly what: physical processes, nuclide shifts, explosions. There is a real danger that a critical mass could develop as a result of thermochemical shifts in nuclear fuel. This in turn could lead to an eruption of radioactive material.

We cannot draw any certain conclusions at this point since we have not examined the contents of the sarcophagus in four years. Many people claim that a new nuclear reaction is impossible. I would like to say to them: Remember that the worst supposedly could not happen earlier either, and still the Chernobyl disaster happened. We cannot rule out anything.

[Winiarski] How safe is the sarcophagus?

[Kostenko] It is said that the shell will last for 35 years, that is to approximately the year 2020. But we had an earthquake in the area in 1991 and it is impossible to rely on that it will last that long.

The truth is that we do not know. It is impossible to spend a long time in the sarcophagus because of the high radiation level. To avoid excessive doses of radiation it is necessary that hundreds of specialists relieve each other, but there simply are not that many top level researchers in Ukraine, perhaps not even in Russia. Therefore international help is needed.

[Winiarski] There are those who believe that it is unnecessary to close Chernobyl of all places since the plant allegedly is Ukraine's safest after all the investments in safety that have taken place.

[Kostenko] I do not agree. This is perhaps true when it comes to operational routines and alarm installations. But Chernobyl has high-power pressure-tube reactors using graphite which have such defects in their basic construction that they impossibly could be safer than the more common light-water reactors.

[Winiarski] Is the sarcophagus without leaks today?

[Kostenko] There is a problem with leaks in the reactor, cracks have developed, not only in the upper part.

But this is true not only of the shell. Large amounts of radioactive waste have accumulated around the sarcophagus and underneath it. This threatens two-thirds of Ukraine's water supply. Half of the country's surface is already poisoned.

[Winiarski] Do you personally believe that Chernobyl will be closed?

[Kostenko] Yes, sooner or later. But we must not only close it but also handle the whole aftermath of the disaster together. Yes, I believe it will be closed. But not that all the problems thereby would be solved. Now we are marking the 10th anniversary of the disaster. But there will be a 100th anniversary, too. And the question is what it will look like then.

Ukraine: Chernobyl Official: No Casualties in Fires

AU2304180396 Paris AFP in English
1713 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, April 23 (AFP) — Fire swept Tuesday [23 April] through several villages in an abandoned area around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, but there was no rise in radioactivity from the facility, officials said.

There were no casualties in the outbreak, which was still raging by mid-afternoon, said the official in charge of the exclusion zone around the plant, Boris Turkovski.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

But Turkovski told AFP he thought it might have been accidentally caused by villagers allowed to return to visit relatives' graves in abandoned villages the 30-kilometre (18 mile) exclusion zone around Chernobyl.

"They throw cigeratte ends on the ground and the grass is exceptionally dry," the official explained.

"The fires did not cause any increase in the levels of radioactivity on the site," the official said.

The villagers are allowed to return to their homes to visit cemeteries after the Orthodox Easter.

Every year some 5,000 to 10,000 people are allowed to enter the forbidden zone only at this time of the year.

One of the plant's four reactors exploded almost exactly ten years ago in the world's worst civilian nuclear disaster.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Arrives on Three Day Visit to Germany

WS2404104596 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1100 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President of Belarus Alyaksandr Lukashenka arrived in the FRG on a three-day visit today. During the first day of his visit, in Dusseldorf, the Belarusian state leader will be presented with a collection of his speeches and addresses. The collection was published in German in the FRG under the title: "Belarus, a Way to the Future." Subsequently, the president will visit the plants of the Ford automobile concern, located in Koln, as well as the Bayer chemical concern. The initerary of Alyaksandr Lukashenka's visit to the FRG also includes trips to Lower Saxony and Berlin.

Belarus: Growing Support for Lukashenka Analyzed

WS2304143296 Minsk BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Apr 96 p 5

[Article by Valyantsin Zhdanko: "'All of Us Trust You So Much, Comrade Lukashenka — Perhaps Even More Than We Trust Ourselves"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In March and April Alyaksandr Lukashenka managed to strengthen his already firm position in the eyes of the Belarusian people. If elections were to be held in the immediate future, some 57.8 percent of respondents would vote for him. This is the highest indicator in the whole 20-month period of Mr. Lukashenka's rule.

Perhaps only on the eve of the 1994 elections was Alyaksandr Lukashenka shown such sympathy on the part of the electorate. Since the last poll, which was held by the "Novak" laboratory at the end of February and the beginning of March [1996], the number of supporters of the president's policy increased by 11.4 percent.

It is very likely that all the events which occurred at the end of March and the beginning of April were advantageous to Alyaksandr Lukashenka. These include: the suppression of participants in the 24 March rally; the anti-integration action held by the opposition on 2 April; and pompous celebrations held in the Kremlin in connection with the signature of the Belarusian-Russian agreement on the creation of the Community of Sovereign Republics.

There is a widespread feeling among the Belarusian people that nobody can compete with the president for leadership. Zyanon Paznyak, who occupies second place in the ratings, has the support of only 6 percent of respondents. It seems that his departure abroad after the 24 March events did not win him popularity.

Another reason for the growth of the nation's love toward Alyaksandr Lukashenka results logically from the attitude of the majority of the Belarusian people toward the idea of restoring a unified state and returning socialistic achievements, and from the fact that they are pinning their hopes on the president's promises. In light of this, the loud speeches delivered by opposition activists were advantageous for Lukashenka. There was a real opportunity to show to the population the enemy, who seems not to be entirely defeated, and is still raising his head. For a considerable portion of the electorate, the mass demonstrations protesting against Lukashenka's policies became a visible answer to the question of who is hampering the implementation of the president's daring ideas.

The figures prove that these conclusions are not groundless. Almost 64 percent of those polled assessed as negative or "rather negative" the activities conducted by the participants in the demonstrations. Only 20.7 percent of respondents assessed these activities as positive or "rather positive." Over 48 percent of respondents supported — to a certain degree — the authority's activities oriented toward suppressing the protest actions. A little more than 34 percent of respondents negatively assessed these activities. We have these results despite the fact that the press and television carried photographs and videos of violence against demonstrators involving the use of batons and tear-gas....

At the first news conference held after the creation of the Belarusian-Russian Community, Alyaksandr Lukashenka exaggerated the degree of support of his initiatives on the part of the population. The number of those opposed to the rapprochement with Russia is not at all a "handful of misled people." However, in general there are 48.1 percent of those who fully support the "new level of integration" and another 27.5 percent of those who are "rather supportive." These figures are more than convincing.

At the same time, the majority of respondents have no illusions with regard to the state of affairs in the economy and changes in the national economy. Some 50.9 percent of respondents stated that the situation in the country did not improve during Alyaksandr Lukashenka's rule.

Nevertheless, those people are once again ready to vote for him. Why is that? For how much longer will the high rating of Mr. Lukashenka be based on blind faith, without being backed up by real improvements in the economy and the social sphere?

As a "real" national president, Alyaksandr Lukashenka is striving to indulge the tastes, opinions, and sympathies of the majority of people who are faithful to him. This tactic, which is multiplied by his eloquence and personal charm, yielded positive results for him not for the first time.

We can dwell on this source for quite a long time before the fantasy of authors of the next era-making initiatives runs out, and as long as Belarus, although to a smaller degree, still remains a sovereign country. Afterwards, there will be a possibility to blame sovereignty and its supporters for the failure of domestic and foreign policy.

Besides, one should keep in mind the main social groups on whose support Alyaksandr Lukashenka is primarily relying. Around 80.5 percent of people with elementary education are ready to vote for Lukashenka again; as well as 52.9 percent of people with secondary education, and only 43.4 percent of people with higher education.

This material is based on the results of a national opinion poll which has been held by Andrey Vardomatski's "Novak" sociological laboratory between 30 March and 10 April 1996. Some 1,106 people were polled.

Moldova

Moldova: Snegur Receives Ukrainian Envoy for Dniester

AU2404122696 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 23/04/1996 (BASA-press) — Moldovan President Mircea Snegur welcomed today the decision of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to appoint Yevhen Levytskyy, former Ukrainian charge d'affaires in Chisinau, as Ukraine's plenipotentiary representative in the talks on Dniester conflict settlement.

At a meeting to mark Levytskyy's conclusion of his diplomatic mission in Chisinau, Snegur said ethnic Ukrainians are second by number in Dniester and "may contribute to speeding up the removal of variances."

In his opinion, its extremely important to sign an agreement between Chisinau and Tiraspol at the future reunion of the CIS heads of state in Moscow.

In the same context, he "highly appreciated the consistent position of Ukraine as guarantor."

Moldova's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity are the principles Ukraine abides by in its foreign policy with the neighbour state, said Levytskyy at the meeting.

Snegur and Levytskyy suggested conducting a meeting of the expert groups under the aegis of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] in Kiev to discuss Ukraine's experience of solving ethnic conflicts.

Moldova: Leaders Discuss Bilateral Ties With Romania's Melescanu

AU2304194096 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1900 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu, who is paying an official visit to Chisinau, examined the main aspects of the bilateral ties with the highest officials of the Republic of Moldova, our envoy Valentin Tigau reports. The Romanian minister had talks with Mircea Snegur, the president of the Republic of Moldova, Parliament Speaker Petru Lucinschi, Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli, and his own opposite number Mihai Popov.

During his meeting with Teodor Melescanu, Foreign Minister Popov said that the most recent period has been marked by a dynamism in bilateral relations. For his part, the Romanian foreign minister said that the fact that he had found in the Republic of Moldova the political will at all levels to develop bilateral relations between the two states was a guarantee of the continuity and prospects for the process of integration of the two countries. Similarly, the sides tackled the issue of the basic political treaty in the context of the special nature of the relations between Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

Moldova: Creanga Affair Reveals Top-Level Dissent

AU2404114296 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1930 GMT 23 Apr 96

["INFOTAG's commentary: 'Events Around Defence Ministry Have Completely Exposed Differences Between Power Structures in Moldova'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Events around the Moldovan Ministry of Defence, which attracted the attention of many both in the republic and outside it, have cast light on some internal problems. Political observers could only guess about their existence, but to speak openly about them was not in local traditions. As a Moldovan top-rank official put it, the republic has again appeared at scandals pages in the world press, for the first time since the 1992 armed conflict in Dniester.

Despite the administration's efforts to "keep everything at home" and avoid undesirable publicity after the split which took place in the ruling Agrarian Democratic Party [PDAM] after President Snegur left it, the events around the defence ministry have completely exposed the differences in the power structures.

After Snegur has dismissed General Pavel Creanga from the ministerial post, which caused a strong negative reaction of the Parliament and government, it became clear that there was no more hope for a reconciliation between the head of state, on the one side, and the Parliament and government, on the other.

The minister's dismissal has become kind of a touchstone showing presidential powers (or, rather, their limitedness) and the principal unwillingness of the ruling party — in person of the parliamentary majority and the government — to make concessions to Snegur after his slashing criticism against them.

The new Moldovan Constitution (as well as most laws), which was adopted in certain political conditions, reflected the concrete situation and arrangement of political forces at the moment.

It was adopted with a due account of the opinions voiced by the Council of Europe and other international organizations. The Constitution guarantees basic rights and freedoms to Moldovan citizens. However, the basic law is not totally free of drawbacks, which foreign experts could not help noticing due to their insufficient knowledge of Moldova, which was well in the interests of the ruling majority.

The drawbacks are first and foremost due to the fact that the Constitution was passed under the pressure of one political party, with a full defiance of the opinion of the opposition who took part in the constitution drafting but chose not to vote for it, because they were unable to influence the final wording of crucial articles.

Such a dictatorship became possible thank to President Snegur as well, who silently supported the PDAM the parliamentary elections, and joined it after the party won the elections. At those times, nobody could predict the noisy split, as controversies with the PDAM leadership were only emerging, and the president supported the Constitution and signed it, thus having reduced his own and successors' plenary powers.

Seeking to bring some of the powers back, or at least to look at the reaction of the new political opponents — his recent allies, the President has subjected the government to an unsparing criticism. It was, perhaps, valid, but one and two years ago the Cabinet deserved it no less than now.

After this verbal attack, the head of state began threatening the Government with resignation in case it fails to fulfil his strict decree on clearing all wage and pension arrears. And in order to demonstrate the resoluteness of his intentions, Snegur dismissed the Minister of Defence, having skillfully used the shortcomings of the legislation which often fails to correspond to the Constitution.

The president must have realized that even in case of failure he would have earned a certain benefit and demonstrated to the public that the current legislation is so imperfect that the head of state is unable even "to fire a corrupted official."

Naturally, the problem was not in Creanga, and not in his pension age, which the President was so particular about. Corruption and various violations existed in the Defence Ministry ever before Creanga, but they were in the attention of only the opposition press. For an example, one can refer to a dubious transaction of selling Moldovan jet fighters to South Yemen.

A presidential ally from the first days of the national armed forces formation, Pavel Creanga himself would hardly oppose to the will of his supreme commander-in-chief, the more so that Snegur first offered a "peaceful resignation," having promised to the general Moldova's highest national award.

However, the situation developed in another direction due to

Creanga's ambitions and the backing he received from the government and parliamentary majority who decided to "rescue the persecuted general" and, at the same time, to let Snegur [word garbled] that he is supposed to respect the opinion of the Parliament, elected by the entire nation, and the government appointed by this forum.

In such a situation, the power structures had nothing to do but to apply to the Constitutional Court and state their readiness to yield to its decision, and thus to demonstrate to the nation once again their adherence to democratic and constitutional norms.

For Snegur, it was much more painful to keep his word. The parliamentary majority has revised its once very critical attitude to the Court, whose decisions were heretofore of little pleasure to the forum. The Court itself has kind of rehabilitated itself, and proved to its critics that its decisions have always been in good harmony with law and are free of political preferences and outside pressures.

Meanwhile, the pressure on the Court was particularly strong, though indirect. The media were referring to "opinions of independent experts" without indicating their names or addresses. A group of parliamentarians addressed to the Council of Europe and, as became known later, to the U.S. Congress. The judges could not, naturally, remain deaf to Snegur's appeal to the General Prosecutor's Office demanding to initial proceedings against senior officers who refused to obey to the supreme commander-in-chief.

A certain pressure was exercised even by Pavel Creanga himself who stated his readiness to resign but only in case the Court will establish the non-constitutionality of the presidential decree.

It is noteworthy that after Creanga was reinstated in his former position, he seems to have changed his mind, and is not only refusing to retire, but is avoiding the media.

As for the power structures, they are busy clearing up their relations, and are resolute to defend their positions. First the president sent an ultimatum-like message to the prime minister demanding to nominate a new ministerial candidate, after which he addressed to the Parliament requesting to consider nomination of another minister.

The premier responded with a not-quite-very-polite public refusal, and the Parliament is still silent, which fact cannot be regarded as a consent.

In near days, the president is going to appear in Parliament. Most probably, he will again use a rough language against the defence minister as well as other government members. It will be quite easy to forecast the reaction of the Parliament and government, which will be a logical continuation of the recent events.

Thus the "languid" differences of the past months are acquiring an active character. And it cannot at all be coincident that the Parliament is planning to pass the Presidential Election Law at the second reading almost simultaneously with Snegur's appearance in the forum.

As the elections are approaching, the "war" between the power structures will be unfolding. This "war," with its strategy and tactics being scrupulously worked out by the sides, may bring any unexpected moves and surprises, new allies and betrayers in either camp. Both sides may use their "heavy artillery" in the form of making public some compromising information. And, like in any war, there will definitely be victims.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: President Expresses Condolences to Yeltsin on Ambush

LD2204125296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1149 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Almaty, April 22 (Interfax) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev expressed his condolences to the relatives of the soldiers killed during last week's separatist attack on a troop convoy in Chechnya to Russian President Boris Yeltsin in a telephone conversation Monday.

Fifty-three servicemen were killed and 52 were wounded in the April 16 attack.

Kazakh presidential spokesman Dulat Kuanyshev told Interfax that the presidents discussed ways of resolving the Chechen crisis, but Kuanyshev did not report any specific proposals.

Nazarbayev has expressed his readiness to act as an intermediary in talks with Chechnya.

The presidents also discussed Yeltsin's visit to Kazakhstan, scheduled for late April, Kuanyshev said.

Kazakhstan: New Communist Leader Signals Change

LD2404092996 Almaty DELOVAYA NEDELYA in Russian 19 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Communism With a Speaker's Face"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Communists are moving their heavy artillery into position. At the last plenary meeting of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan on 13 April, Serikbolsyn Abdildin, ex-speaker of the self-dissolved Supreme Soviet, chairman of the Respublika coordination council, and Doctor of Economics, was elected first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Mr. Abdildin gave an exclusive interview to DELOVAYA NEDELYA.

[DELOVAYA NEDELYA] Serikbolsyn Abdildayevich, what is your attitude toward the Communist Party of Russia and its leader Gennadiy Zyuganov? How do you assess his chances of victory [in the Russian presidential election] on 16 June?

[Abdildin] My attitude toward the Communist Party of Russia is, on the whole, positive. I am not personally acquainted with Gennadiy Andreyevich [Zyuganov], although we met when I was working in Moscow. I am closely watching his activities now, and I think he is an honest man. This is the primary quality for a leader. Zyuganov is a Doctor of Philosophy, is popular among the masses, and is running for president in a bloc that millions of people support.

As a rule, the opponents of the leader of the Russian communists try to scare voters with a return to a totalitarian regime if he wins. In my opinion, it is not fair, as Zyuganov has nothing in common with the [Soviet] regime: he is for a multi-party system, multi-structural ownership, and a law-governed state. Totalitarism is, above all, characteristic of the present president [Boris Yeltsin], who was first secretary of the [Sverdlovsk] regional party committee, first secretary of Moscow city party committee, and a candidate-member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

If the people of Russia are fighting for justice in the real meaning of the word, then Zyuganov should be elected, maybe even in the first round. Elections are a sort of battle between good and evil, and unfortunately reason does not always triumph, but this time the people of Russia have a chance to sort out who is who from their own experience.

[DELOVAYA NEDELYA] Serikbolsyn Abdildayevich, what do the ideals of communism mean to you personally?

[Abdildin] For me they have specific meanings, if we bear in mind that communist ideals include the fundamental human standards, which the popular masses have been developing for thousands of years. They include humane relations and mutual respect between people, honesty, truthfulness, moral purity, simplicity, modesty in general human and individual life, concern for the upbringing of children, implacable opposition to injustice, and so on. Do our people not need these qualities today?

Second, communism is a scientific theory — a theory, not a dogma. Therefore the development of science must be based not only on ideals, but also on real experience.

[DELOVAYA NEDELYA] Does your election as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan mean a change to the party's economic program?

[Abdildin] A change to the party program's economic policy is quite possible, taking into account the real situation in society. This is an issue for our next congress.

[DELOVAYA NEDELYA] Serikbolsyn Abdildayevich, why do you think that the [CIS] integration declared in words is virtually not being implemented in deeds?

[Abdildin] There are objective and subjective reasons for that. One of the reasons, in Kazakhstan's experience, is that the executive branch of power proclaimed the self-regulation of the non-existent market with the aim of forming a clan-national bourgeoisie. A governable and controllable economy was replaced by chaos and neglect, which in turn created favorable grounds for squandering and misappropriating state property.

Unfortunately, the present power-that-be have been able to make the most of the formation of a market space neither in the CIS, nor on Kazakhstan's domestic market. The reformist idea of the president of the republic [Nursultan Nazarbayev] has meant, hundreds of thousands of unemployed and destitute people, and material and moral poverty of the society.

[DELOVAYA NEDELYA] A so-called "Treaty of Four Plus X" was recently signed in Moscow [the customs and integration accord between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, signed on 29 March]. In your opinion, how will this setting apart of the four states be reflected in the mood of the other members of the CIS?

[Abdildin] Here I see two points. First, certain states may understand this step as the wish of [Belarusian President Alyaksandr] Lukashenka, Nazarbayev, and [Kyrgyz President Askar] Akayev to have Yeltsin reelected. Second, others will perceive this union as the split-up of the CIS, which may lead to the disintegration of the present geopolitical space. One point is obvious: the restoration of the union in the form of the USSR is unrealistic, but close integration is inevitable.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Yeltsin Adviser: Moscow's Stand on Conflict 'Flexible'

LD2304205396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1825 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, April 23 (Interfax) — Russia has always favored a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the Tajik government and the opposition, exclusively in accordance with the Tajik Constitution, Russian presidential National Security Adviser Yuriy Baturin told journalists in Dushanbe Tuesday, after a meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov. Baturin is on a working visit to Tajikistan.

At the same time he stressed that "Russia's stand on the issue is rather flexible. We are prepared to take into consideration the positions of all sides and we will gratefully accept proposals from other countries interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict."

Baturin said he and Rakhmanov had discussed Russia's aid to Tajikistan, in particular in the military and technological area.

Together with Rakhmanov, he visited the 12th outpost of the Moscow border unit and attended regular tactical exercises of one of the units of collective peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan.

Giving a high assessment to the exercises, Baturin said that the collective peacekeeping forces and the Tajik Defense Ministry may hold joint military exercises in June in order to work out cooperation in a combat-like situation.

Tajikistan: Russian Commander Concerned About Tajik Rebel Preparations

LD2204151196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1456 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, April 22 (Itar-Tass) — The commander of Russian border troops in Tajikistan, Lieutenant-General Pavel Tarasenko, told Afghan authorities on Monday that Tajik opposition rebels are regrouping and concentrating their forces in Afghanistan near the Tajik border.

Tarasenko, who is touring border guard units in the Pamir region of Tajikistan, met Colonel Jabirsho-Faiza, the commissioner of 78th Border Guard Battalion of the Afghan Defence Ministry's 12th Brigade, to tell him about his concerns about the concentration of Tajik separatists in the border section under his control.

He said rebels have also received a reinforcement of troops, military equipment and weapons. They have brought their total strength to about 500 people and are preparing for a new thrust to Tajikistan.

The Afghan colonel admitted that there has been certain movement of opposition rebels in the region controlled by his battalion and assured Tarasenko that he will take all measures to prevent any armed attempts to cross the border.

Tajikistan: Radio Reports Followers of Karimov Threatened Top Officials

LD2204130096 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0600 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Adherents of Khoja Karimov, the former commander of Popular Front subunits and deputy of parliament from Gazimalik District [Khatlon Region], have threatened to kill Amirqul Azimov, the prosecutor general, and the minister of internal affairs of the regime.

A reliable source from the prosecutor's office of Tajikistan told a correspondent of Voice of Free Tajikistan in Dushanbe that unidentified people, who introduced themselves as adherents of Khoja Karimov, have phoned the office and house of Azimov many times and said: All of you must answer for Khoja Komandir [Commander Khoja].

He also said that a special group of officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Security of the Dushanbe regime has been organized to uncover the identity of the people who are making the threats. This group has not yielded any results, and nor has the investigation into the criminal case against Khoja Karimov.

On the other hand, the aforementioned source from the regime's prosecutor's office told the correspondent of Voice of Free Tajikistan in Dushanbe that additional measures are planned to provide security for Amirqul Azimov, Saidamir Zuhurov, and other leaders of the security bodies of the regime.

It should be noted that Khoja Karimov was the comrade in arms of Sangak Safarov and Saidali Saidov [Popular Front leaders in 1992] and of the current leaders, [Tajik President] Emomali Rakhmanov and [first deputy chairman of parliament] Abdulmajid Dostiyev in the Popular Front, and was detained by the [Rakhmanov's] regime itself for dangerous crimes. Officers of the [Ministry] of Internal Affairs of the Dushanbe regime detained the criminal [Karimov] in autumn 1995, but then it was reported that Khoja Karimov, the former deputy of the Supreme Assembly, had escaped from the prison. However, some people think that the report is far from true, and that Khoja Karimov has already been killed.

Tajikistan: Russian Paper Views 'Unprecedented' Economic Crisis

MM2304152896 Moscow TRUD in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Anatoliy Larenok: "Tajikistan. Recession"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The economic crisis in Tajikistan is unprecedented in its scale. A predominantly agrarian country, the republic reduced agricultural production by as much as another 20 percent last year. The production of raw cotton proved to be 333,000 tonnes less than planned, for grain the figure was 370,000, and potatoes — 92,000 tonnes. There are great losses in livestock farming.

According to foreign experts, the main reason for the crisis is that reforms in the agrarian sector are faltering. There is low production efficiency on the collective and state farms, which do not have economic freedom.

Power generation has declined. Consumers received only 49.1 percent of the thermal energy needed — which had a negative effect on industrial enterprises' operation. The volume of aluminum production, for example, has fallen to less than one-half in recent years.

The volume of capital investments has fallen by 60 percent. Construction materials production is practically paralyzed.

The country's transportation system is on the brink of complete collapse. Over half of public transport vehicles are standing idle. There is no money to restore and repair railroad transportation.

Today all you can buy with a minimum wage in Tajikistan is 1.5 kg of potatoes, and with a minimum pension — three bread rolls. The population's income has fallen by almost 60 percent. "The living standard in the country is so low," trade union experts are noting, "that it does not even guarantee the physical survival of the majority of the population." Unemployment is growing. The drugs business is spreading. A few days ago, border guards seized over 35 kg of narcotic substances in the Pamir in a 24-hour period alone, and the figure is 800 kg since the beginning of the year.

Analysts from the International Foundation for the Support of Political and Economic Reforms believe that in order to get out of the protracted crisis it is necessary first and foremost to settle the inter-Tajik conflict on the basis of a political compromise, and then implement a program for the denationalization of the economy, pay off wage arrears by issuing privatization checks to the population, giving them the right to own shares in state property....

When and how such reasonable recommendations will be implemented is hard to say at the moment.

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Appoints New Presidential Chief of Staff

LD1904182896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1617 GMT 19 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Emomali Rakhmanov has appointed the chairman of Tajikistan's Constitutional Court, Khomiddin Sharipov, chief of the presidential staff, the presidential press-secretary Zafar Saidov has said.

Sharipov was born in the Satalmush village, the Dangara district of the Khotlon region in 1947. In 1971 he graduated from the Law Department of the Tajik State University. A career judge. In 1993-1995 he was the judge of the Khotlon region, and in 1995 appointed chairman of the Constitutional Court of Tajikistan.

Rakhmanov's press-secretary said about Sharipov's new appointment that the post of the chief of the presidential staff had remained vacant for a long time. "President Rakhmanov eventually chose Sharipov as the most competent, skilled and responsible candidate," Saidov said. Sharipov had not been removed from his previous post yet, he added.

Armenia

Armenia: President Leads Delegation to Luxembourg, Brussels

NC2204175396 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1600 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenia is pursuing energetic political and diplomatic activity, in order to enroll in international organizations and deepen mutually beneficial ties with other countries.

As already reported, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his delegation — which includes Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan; Defense Minister Vazgen Sargisyan; Gagik Shahbazyan, minister for relations with the CIS, EU, and international economic organizations; Armenia's senior ambassador to the EU Armen Sargisyan; and other officials — left for Luxembourg on 21 April.

The aim of the visit is to sign a partnership and cooperation agreement between Armenia and EU member-countries. It will be signed by Vahan Papazyan for Armenia and by the Commissioner for External Political Relations Hans van den Broek for the EU.

While in Luxembourg, the Armenian president will also meet Grand Duke Jean.

The Armenian delegation will then leave for Brussels, where meetings with Belgian King Albert II, President of the European Commission Jacques Santer, President of the European Parliament Klaus Hansch, and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana are expected.

Armenia: President Hopes To Join Caucasus Peace Declaration

LD2304204296 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 1515 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenia will join the For Peace in the Caucasus declaration [initiated by the Georgian and Azerbaijani presidents] only after the conflict in [Nagornay] Karabakh has been settled. This was what the Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan said answering a question asked by a Georgian TV correspondent at a news conference in Luxembourg.

Armenia: Ter-Petrosyan, Aliyev Hold 'Sincere, Constructive' Talks

NC2204202596 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1900 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A sincere and constructive meeting took place between Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev, who are in Luxembourg to sign a partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU. Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Geydar Aliyev reaffirmed their determination to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to abide by the nearly two-year-long cease-fire pending the signing of a political agreement.

In addition, the two presidents agreed that the resolution of the conflict should be based on internationally recognized principles and norms concerning this conflict, that the ongoing talks within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group should continue with the aim of signing a political agreement, and that direct dialogue between the two sides should be spurred to find a comprehensive resolution to the problem.

Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Aliyev agreed that the resolution of the conflict will significantly contribute to the stability and security of the region, and to the economic and social development of the people.

The two presidents' views also coincided as regards speedy resolution of the humanitarian issues. The need for swift and unconditional release of hostages and prisoners of war was stressed above all [word indistinct].

Presidents Ter-Petrosyan and Aliyev agreed to continue their contacts.

Armenia: Liparityan: No Documents Signed Without Karabakh

NC2204141596 Yerevan ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN in English 1111 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan ("Respublica Armenia" daily), 04/22/96 — Chief Advisor of the ROA [Republic of Armenia] President Zhirayr Liparityan returned from Ankara on 13 April. Armenian media have already quoted Turkish CUMHURIYET, MILLIYET, and Marmara's publications in this regard. RESPUBLICA ARMENIA now published an exclusive interview with presidential advisor, some extracts from which we publish below.

— Our society is mostly interested in the results of your trip to Turkey, and whether there is any progress in Armenia-Turkey relations.
— Interest in regard with our meetings with Turkish leaders is understandable. During a meeting with Prime Minister Yilmaz we touched upon his declaration regarding Armenian-Turkish relations, when he said that Turkey is ready to open its borders if a document about principally important problems is signed.
— You mean the problem of resolution of the Karabakh conflict?
— Yes, naturally, in regard with the problem of Mountainous Karabakh. We can see that there are some changes in the position of Turkey in this regard. Turkish

side insisted that the whole document shall be signed, but we advised that it is not necessary to relate two problems with each other.

We believe that if a solution is found to the Karabakh conflict, which satisfies all the sides, then this document will be signed by Armenia, regardless its consequences.

— But do you think that Armenia, based on certain considerations, can possibly sign the document without Mountainous Karabakh's participation?
— Minsk group is dealing with preparation of the Grand Political Agreement. And I can say for sure that Armenia will not sign any political agreement without participation of Mountainous Karabakh. This principle remains unchanged.

The last report of Minsk group to the UN Security Council states clearly that the agreement should be signed by three sides of the conflict: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Mountainous Karabakh. But the process of resolution on the level of Minsk group is too slow, and proposals are being made to sign a primary documents about key points of resolution.

We do not relate the problem of resolution of the Karabakh conflict with Armenia-Turkey relations. We realize though that the problem, say, of Turkey's blockade of Armenia is rather significant for Azerbaijan. Replying to Turkish Prime Minister, President Levon Ter-Petrosyan stressed that Turkey should seriously think about the consequences of such pressure on the process of negotiations, and to what extent will it facilitate the process of normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. This problem was central during our conversation with Turkish Prime Minister.

— Armenian media quoted your words that "even if Turkey does not unlock the borders for another 1,000 years..."
— Yes, during the meeting with Turkish Envoy [Ayhan] Kamel we said directly: even if Turkey declares that it will keep its borders locked for another 1,000 years, we won't sign a political document, which is not acceptable for the Armenian side. So, we won't accept any compromises if they endanger Mountainous Karabakh's security, regardless whether it concerns the problem of gas pipe-line or unlocking the borders.
— Armenian press has been often accusing the leaders of Armenia in forgetting the history, particularly in regard with the genocide of 1915...
— The position of Armenian government in regard with the genocide remains the same. Best of all, it was expressed in President Levon Ter-Petrosyan's speech at the international conference dedicated to the genocide last year.
— Do you think that the position of Turkey in this regard may improve?
— Yes, I think this is possible.

Armenia: Iran Signs Agreements Toward Economic Cooperation

LD2404105996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0924 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, April 24 (Interfax) — Armenian Industrial Minister Amot Safaryan and the executive director of the Iranian government organization for social well-being Mehdi Karbasiyan signed a memorandum on mutual understanding between the two countries and a packet of bilateral economic agreements.

Iran and Armenia plan to create a wide range of joint ventures in the oil refining, chemical, pharmaceutical, and food products areas, and bilateral integration is also planned in light industry, director of Razdanmash and co-chairman of the intergovernmental working group Telman Ter-Petrosyan said. Armenia is counting on a large flow of Iranian investment to create a complex base of joint production. On the other side, Armenian producers have received many opportunities to enter the Iranian market.

Mutually beneficial cooperation with Iran "will not get in the way of closer ties with the CIS, specifically Armenia's possible entrance into the CIS Customs Union," Safaryan said.

Iran is the second largest investor in the Armenian economy, the Iranian Melab bank has opened a branch in Armenia, and a number of joint ventures and tourist companies are already in operation.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Aliyev Signs Agreement, Meets Ter-Petrosyan in Luxembourg

NC2204193396 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1600 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev's working visit to the Western countries is continuing. President Geydar Aliyev held a number of meetings in Luxembourg, where he signed a partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU and EU member-countries. The Azerbaijani delegation headed by President Geydar Aliyev left for Belgium today. The head of state will then go on to Norway.

Our correspondent [name indistinct] is on the line from Luxembourg:

[Begin recording] [correspondent] A one-on-one meeting was held last night between Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev, who are on working visits to Luxembourg. The presidents, who held extensive talks on the Karabakh conflict, adopted a joint communique on the need to reactivate the peace talks within the OSCE Minsk Group, to render them more effective [words indistinct], and to continue with direct dialogue between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Today, that is on 22 April, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia discussed the situation in Transcaucasia, with the participation of German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

A cooperation agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and the EU this afternoon at the EU Commission in Luxembourg.

At present a regular EU foreign ministers annual meeting is taking place in Luxembourg. The aim of the Azerbaijani president, who is paying a visit here on such an important occasion, was to sign the cooperation agreement with the EU [passage indistinct].

The nature of the signing ceremony said much about the importance of the documents signed today. This was yet another step for Azerbaijan towards integration with the world. During the ceremony, organized in keeping with European traditions, the republic's President Geydar Aliyev signed the partnership agreement between Azerbaijan and the EU and EU member-countries [words indistinct]. The documents were signed for the EU by Italian Foreign Minister Agnelli, who is the EU term chairman, and EU Commissioner Hans van den Broek.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Geydar Aliyev described the agreement as a historic step towards Azerbaijan's integration with the EU. [Words indistinct] after the signing ceremony, the presidents of the three Transcaucasian countries held a news conference at the European central conference room. Reporters were mostly interested in ways of resolving conflicts and matters relating to future economic cooperation and integration with the EU.

The Azerbaijani president's working visit to Luxembourg ends today. In a few hours, he will leave for Belgium. The Azerbaijani president will discuss [words indistinct] at NATO headquarters in Brussels in the morning. [end recording]

Azerbaijan: Armenia, Azerbaijan Want Peaceful End to Karabakh Conflict

LD2304163796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1459 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, April 23 (Interfax) — Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Geydar Aliyev have confirmed their adherence to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The presidents also stated the need to preserve the truce that has lasted for almost two years, including the signing of a political agreement to settle the Karabakh conflict during their meeting in Luxembourg on April 22, the press service of the Armenian president told Interfax Tuesday.

The presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed agreements on partnership and cooperation with the European Union in Luxembourg Monday.

Ter-Petrosyan and Aliyev advocated continuation of the talks in the framework of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk group on Nagorno-Karabakh, and the activization of a direct dialogue between the parties in order to ensure the signing of a political agreement, according to the press service.

The presidents also agreed that the conflict's settlement would be a substantial contribution to the establishment of stability and security in the region and would promote the economic and social development of peoples living in the Transcaucasus.

The leaders of the two countries expressed a common opinion on the need to solve humanitarian issues as soon as possible, primarily, an immediate and unconditional liberation of all hostages and POWs, the presidential press service told Interfax.

Azerbaijan: Aliyev: Agreement With European Community 'Important'

NC2304110896 Baku TURAN in English 1813 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, 22 April 1996, TURAN — "Very important" is the agreement which Azerbaijan will sign on April 22 with European Community, Geydar Aliyev said at the airport before leaving for Luxembourg.

Geydar Aliyev said that after Luxembourg he would visit head-quarters in Brussels for presentation of the document of Azerbaijan within the frameworks of the program "Partnership for Peace." Then the president will pay official visit to Norway.

"State Oil Company of Norway 'Statoil' is actively cooperating with Azerbaijan in developing oil fields of Azerbaijan. Bilateral documents on further development of relations will be signed after the talks in Oslo. I think these steps strengthen state independence of Azerbaijan and its place in the world community," the president said.

Azerbaijan: Russia Reportedly To Install Missiles in Armenia

NC2304105296 Baku TURAN in English
1913 GMT 22 Apr 96

["Russia Is Going To Install in Armenia Zenit-Missile Complexes 'Buk-M1'" — TURAN headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/22.04.96/TURAN — Russia and Armenia are going to sign an agreement for delivery of some anti-aircraft complex "Buk-M1", according to sources in the head-quarter of Caucasian Special Border District of Russia. Military specialists consider that this system of anti-air defence is better than the system "Tunguska" and "Shilka" which are presently available in Russian and Armenian military groups.

According to informed sources, even in 1994 two systems "Shilka" of Russian forces in Armenia were transferred to the southern part of the Karabakh front (Fizuli region of Azerbaijan.)

If new anti-air defence system "Buk-M1" are transferred to the Armenian-Azeri front the ability the Armenian anti-air defence system to strike the targets at the territory of Azerbaijan will grow, military experts consider.

It is noteworthy that the negotiations about deliveries to Armenia of more modern systems are taking place after the next refusal of Azerbaijan to join the united anti-air defence system of the CIS.

Reinforcing of the Armenian forces is assessed by military specialists as one more pressure of Moscow on Azerbaijan. Russia indirectly pushes Armenia and separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh to further withstanding with Azerbaijan through increasing the military power of Armenia and by this disturbing the balance of forces and means in the region.

Azerbaijan: Mutalibov, Gaziyev Case Not Linked to Russian Relations

LD2204173296 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1603 GMT 22 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Geydar Aliyev categorically disagrees with the assertion that the arrest of ex-president Ayaz Mutalibov and the extradition of ex-defense minister Ragim Gaziyev were "Moscow's response to Baku's concessions."

"These are primitive insinuations," he told reporters in the Baku airport shortly before his departure to Brussels, where the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian leaders are to sign a partnership and cooperation agreement with the European Union Monday.

He said he had not failed to notice such judgements in the Moscow press and was "greatly surprised by them."

He also said inter-state relations cannot be influenced by private factors, particularly relations between Azerbaijan and "such a great country as Russia."

He emphasized that Azerbaijan viewed Russia as a friendly country, cooperation with which has nothing to do with "momentary considerations" and which does not depend on whether or not a criminal will be extradited.

"Otherwise, the level of relations between the two countries would be lowered," he said.

"Russia and Azerbaijan are above these private incidents," he said referring to the arrest of Ayaz Mutalibov and the extradition of Ragim Gaziyev. In his opinion, these incidents point to nothing else but "good cooperation between the two countries' law-enforcement bodies."

IF Note: Ragim Gaziyev, who, with four high-ranking Azerbaijani military officials, was accused of surrendering to Armenia regional centers Shusha and Lachin in the zone of the Karabakh conflict, escaped from the preliminary detention prison of the Azerbaijani Interior Ministry on September 22. Gaziyev is also faced with charges of organizing a state coup in Azerbaijan in October 1994 and March 1995.

Ayaz Mutalibov, who was taken to a Moscow hospital with a heart attack following his arrest, has been accused by Baku of organizing mass disturbances and attempted seizure of power. He is also faced with charges of "connivance and inactivity" during the introduction of Soviet troops to Baku in January 1990, when, according to official sources, more than 130 people were killed, 700 wounded and 40 reported missing.

In the opinion of Azerbaijan's current authorities, through Mutalibov's fault Azerbaijani villages were surrendered to the Armenian formations in the zone of the Karabakh conflict in the spring of 1992.

At the same time, Aliyev praised "active and very successful cooperation" between Azerbaijan and Russia, including within the framework of the CIS. As an example he referred to the projects on the joint operation of off-shore Caspian oil fields. He said that the Russian company LUKoil plays an important role in the recently established international consortium for implementing "an oil contract of the century." He said that in January 1996 he and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed an agreement on the transportation of early oil from Azerbaijan through Russia to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.

Aliyev also emphasized Baku's determination to do everything in its power to broaden relations with Russia in other areas.

He said that agreement on bilateral cooperation had a "large-scale and inter-state character". Compared to this, "the personalities of Gaziyev and Mutalibov are a mere trifle," he said.

He said that if Gaziyev and Mutalibov plead guilty, the Azerbaijani authorities will mitigate the punishment.

"Our laws are just. If a person has regrets about what he has done, he may always count on mercy," he said.

However, in any case, Mutalibov "must return to Azerbaijan and be tried," said Aliyev.

He gave to understand that the charges brought against Mutalibov do not incur capital punishment.

"People must not leave their homeland even if they have committed a crime," he said. "It would be better to clear the issue with the people and with the authorities than to seek refuge in some country," he said.

Azerbaijan: Aliyev Discusses Mutallibov Arrest, Gaziyev Extradition

NC2304112196 Baku TURAN in English 1813 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, 22 Apr 1996, TURAN — "People must not escape from their motherland even if they are guilty. It is better to clarify everything with people and with the powers than to hide in other countries," Geydar Aliyev told Russian journalists at Baku's airport before leaving for West Europe.

According to president, the arrest of Ayaz Mutallibov in Moscow and extradition of Rahim Gaziyev to Azerbaijan testify "good cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia and law enforcement bodies of the two states. We highly appreciate these relations," the president said.

Responding the question on Rahim Gaziyev he noted that Rahim Gaziyev escaped from jail of the Ministry of National Security and left Azerbaijan illegally. "He should respond for that. Concerning forgiveness - our court is just. If a man admits his guilt, he will not be treated badly. The same attitude can be shown towards Gaziyev," the president said.

Being asked about further fate of ex-president Ayaz Mutallibov in Azerbaijan, Geydar Aliyev said "As far as I know Mutallibov is not accused according to Articles for which he can be sentenced to capital punishment. So I think he could not be sentenced to death. But he must return and answer before the court."

Geydar Aliyev refuted the guesses that the arrest of Mutallibov and extradition of Rahim Gaziyev were the results of some concessions on the part of Azerbaijan.

According to Geydar Aliyev, bilateral cooperation does not depend on the fact if Moscow will return to Azerbaijan any criminal or not. "We stand higher than these private cases. We have a lot of large international projects of cooperation, and the personality of Mutalibov or Gaziyev is trifle compared with these plans," the president said.

Azerbaijan: Ex-President Elchibey Reportedly Found

NC2304104796 Baku TURAN in English 1314 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, 22 April, 1996, TURAN — The chairman of PFA party, Abulfaz Elchibey, is in the house of his relatives in the village of Keleki. However, on Saturday when the PFA issued the statement due to seizure of headquarters of Elchibey in this village by policemen, there was no information about his whereabouts and fate, the first deputy chairman of PFA party, Ali Kerimov, told TURAN agency.

He said that seizure of building occupied by Elchibey in Keleki is politically motivated, though formally this building, which Elchibey has been occupying since June 1993, belongs to local geological expedition. "Attacks on PFA and its heads during republican meeting April 5-6 dedicated to events of March 1995, arrests of 12 heads of PFA in Nakhichevan, arrest of Panah Huseynov in Baku and at last ousting of Elchibey from his headquarters testify to purpose-oriented policy of harassment of the opposition", Ali Kerimov says.

Last Saturday the PFA party distributed the statement that approximately 20 policemen seized the headquarters of the head of Popular Front party, Abulfaz Elchibey, in the village of Keleki of Nakhichevan's Ordubad region. The statement read that connection with the village is lost and there is no information about Elchibey's fate.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Hails Treaty Between EU, Transcaucasian States

LD2304170896 Tbilisi BGI in Russian
0900 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze signed a treaty on partnership and cooperation with the European Union in Luxembourg yesterday. [passage omitted] The Georgian delegation regarded this day as a day when wishes came true.

The presidents of all three Transcaucasian republics, 15 foreign ministers of the EU countries, and leaders of the European Commission attended the ceremony of signing the treaty.

In his speech, the Georgian president said, in particular: It was George Marshall who noted in his plan of Europe's revival — a patient cannot be made a victim of a lingering consultations. Time for consultations is up for Georgia and the Transcaucasus. The patient is no longer in danger, thanks to Europe. Europe is beginning to comprehend the significance of the Transcaucasus region. This is confirmed by the work done under the TRACECA [Transport Corridor Europe-Central Asia] project. The transport corridor will revive a historical mission of the Transcaucasus, which will again become a link between continents and civilizations, Eduard Shevardnadze emphasized.

Speaking of EU eastward expansion, Eduard Shevardnadze said he regarded the process as the one of safeguarding the territorial integrity and economic development of the countries. The Georgian president said the process was providing a firm basis for creating a single system of Eurasian security. [passage omitted]

Following the ceremony of signing the treaty, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel invited the presidents of the three Transcaucasian states to a formal breakfast at the residence of the German ambassador to Luxembourg. The Georgian ambassador to Germany, Konstantin Gabashvili, commented on the event: This was a step taken by Germany, the major force in the EU, to demonstrate that the Caucasus is given a significant role in building new Europe.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Views NATO Enlargement Issue

LD2304205696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1933 GMT 23 Apr 96

[By Aleksandr Mineyev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BRUSSELS, April 23 (Itar-Tass) - NATO's enlargement should not trigger a new confrontation in Europe, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze said after he met NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana on Tuesday.

"Nobody can impose any restrictions on NATO's enlargement, however it (the enlargement) should not result in a new confrontation in Europe or the entire world," Shevardnadze said.

"I think a way can be find to make the enlargement painless. Many things will depend on the promotion of cooperation between NATO and Russia. But on the whole, each country makes its own choice," he said.

In a comment on recent statements by Vladislav Ardzinba, leader of Georgia's independence-seeking republic of Abkhazia, that Abkhazia may agree only to a "federation union" with Georgia and not to autonomy status, the Georgian leader said that talks were actively going on through Russian mediation and under the auspices of the United Nations.

"We offer Abkhazia the maximum amount of autonomy, a constitution, a parliament, a hymn, a flag, and more independence in solving economic issues," he said.

"I consider compromise is possible on such a basis and with active mediation by Russia, the U.N., and, hopefully, European bodies," he added.

Shevardnadze said his visit to the NATO Headquarters was a logical continuation of his visit to the European Union Headquarters where he had signed cooperation and partnership accords between Georgia and the EU.

The Georgian president said Solana, an old friend of his, had accepted an invitation to pay an official visit to Tbilisi. Solana, in turn, said he would use the opportunity in the nearest future.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Office Denies Belgium Trip Cut Short

LD24041000[illegible] Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian
0900 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 24 Apr — Yesterday, the Russian mass media carried reports, quoting REUTER news agency, that the Georgian president has cut short his visit to Belgium because of the explosion in Tbilisi. An IPRINDA correspondent has been told at Shevardnadze's press service that these reports do not correspond with reality. Shevardnadze returned to Tbilisi yesterday in accordance with the visit's program.

Georgia: Tbilisi Blast Death Toll Reaches Five; Sabotage Ruled Out

LD2404104096 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian 0900 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 24 Apr — An IPRINDA correspondent has been told at the press center of the Georgian Interior Ministry that as a result of the explosion in Tbilisi on 23 April, five people have now died and 42 are in hospital with various degrees of injury.

Preliminary investigation has shown that the explosion was not a terrorist attack or an act of sabotage, but was caused by a gas leak in the basement of the shop where the explosion happened.

Georgia: South Ossetian Parliament Approves Agreement With Georgia

LD2304155596 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 0855 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tskhinvali, 23 Apr (IBERIA) — An IBERIA correspondent was told at the Shida Kartli provincial administration that the South Ossetian People's Parliament [Nikhas] approved a memorandum on an agreement, which was signed in Tskhinvali. Ludvig Chibirov, chairman of the People's Parliament, submitted the memorandum to the parliament for consideration in advance and only on its approval he said he was ready to sign the agreement with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. In L. Chibiriv's view, the ceremony of signing the agreement should be held on neutral territory.

Georgia: Russian Troops 'Arbitrarily' Checking Abkhazia-Bound Ships

AU2404111296 Tbilisi DRONI in Georgian 12 Apr 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Oral Instructions Are Sufficient for Russian Border Troops"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Georgia, which has gotten used to Russian border troops interpreting in an arbitrary manner decisions adopted at the highest level, is faced with a new problem. The fact that the Shevardnadze-Yeltsin agreement on the checking in Poti of ships destined for Abkhazia by the forces of both countries is not being implemented represents just one side of the problem. On the initiative of the Russian border troops, they themselves will check ships entering the port of Poti and only thereafter inform the Georgian side of their arrival. According to them, if there is no response from the Georgian side within 48 hours, the Russians will arbitrarily let the vessels sail on to Sukhumi. According to a statement made by Rozhayev, commander of the Russian border troops in Georgia, they are acting on oral instructions received from Russia. The command of the Russian border troops has not yet received the document certifying such action. However, Mr. Rozhayev cannot receive this document for the simple reason that it simply does not exist. Russian and Georgian experts are continuing work on devising a mechanism for checking ships arriving in Abkhazia.

It is clear that, until the experts reach an agreement, it is superfluous to think about the joint checking of ships in Poti and Russian border troops will "check" ships in Abkhazian waters.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Reviews Abkhazian Problem

AU2404111096 Tbilisi SAKARTVELOS RESPUBLIKA in Georgian 12 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by the President's Press Service — SAKINFORM: "Eduard Shevardnadze: 'I Do Not Free Myself of Responsibility for Everything That Has Happened in Abkhazia and That Will Be in This Region'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The Georgian authorities did not intend to wage war against Abkhazia," stated President Eduard Shevardnadze at the session of Parliament held in Tbilisi on 10 April at which the question of the conflict in this autonomous republic was discussed. "The State Council at that time, whose presidium consisted of four people," said Shevardnadze, "adopted a decision on the transfer of troops from one region to another so that they could protect the railroad and highway. This was dictated by vital necessity as the plunder and theft of cargo being transported along these routes and destined not only for Georgia but also Armenia and Azerbaijan and Russia had reached a catastrophic scale. However, the troops were categorically forbidden from entering into cities and populated localities, which, in spite of repeated promises made by the leadership of the defense department, was violated from the very start." According to Eduard Shevardnadze, the transfer of military subunits should have been followed by increased activity on the part of the police in the struggle against armed bands who were committing outrages in the region and terrorizing the civilian population.

Eduard Shevardnadze pointed out: "In spite of coordinating the implementation of the operation in advance with Vladislav Ardzinba [Abkhazian leader], neither the defense minister nor the head of the General Staff informed the Abkhazian leadership of the details of the operation itself and did not familiarize them with the plan of action and, in so doing, violated the State Council's instructions. Instead, the troops marched into Sukhumi and other populated localities in the autonomous republic, which resulted in confrontations, the spilling of blood, and the start of the armed conflict." As Shevardnadze said: "This was a crime before Georgia. We all knew very well that these steps could not be taken as the consequences would be most serious. Therefore, we tried in every way possible to avoid this conflict." As the Georgian president pointed out, it was for this reason that he had two telephone conversations with President Boris Yeltsin who was at that time in Sochi.

Eduard Shevardnadze said that, at the beginning of the 1990's, unlike in other countries of the former Union, Russian-Georgian relations had been extremely strained. Through the efforts of nationalist forces, there had even appeared a syndrome of enmity, which played a fateful role in Georgia's case.

The Georgian President Believes That Abkhazia Today Is Racism in Action

During his speech at the session of Parliament on 10 April at which the causes and consequences of the Abkhazian conflict were analyzed, President Eduard Shevardnadze pointed out that this conflict had been thought out by the Abkhazian separatists from the start. He reminded the deputies of the apartheid law on elections that had been previously adopted in the autonomous republic and the anticonstitutional decisions of its Supreme Council whose aim had been to legalize the power of one considerably smaller ethnic group over another. As Eduard Shevardnadze said, even before the start of the conflict and then during it, a racist ideology was implanted in Abkhazia, which was expressed in persecution on racial grounds and the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the civilian Georgian population. "Abkhazia today," emphasized the Georgian president, "is racism in action, racism in practice." "Not in any age and not in any country," said he, " has there been so much cruel persecution and such a massive deportation of hundreds of thousands of people from their birthplaces. This had not even occurred during the time of Stalin, Beria, and Lenin. Self-determination and independence, which is achieved by means of genocide and ethnic cleansing, is nothing other than fascism," concluded Eduard Shevardnadze.

What Russia's Reactionary Forces Carried Out in Abkhazia Has Backfired on Its People

President Eduard Shevardnadze criticized in harsh terms the actions of Russia's well-known reactionary forces: "What these forces carried out in Abkhazia has backfired on its people in Chechnya, Budennovsk, Pervomayskoye, Kizlyar...." As he pointed out, it is precisely support for and complicity in aggressive separatism that have furthered terrorism and the violation of human rights on a massive scale.

The president seriously rebuked those international human rights organizations that, up to now, have not been working fully on the problem of the violation of the basic rights of 350,000 refugees from Abkhazia yet, at the same time, often direct the attention of the entire world to individual and isolated cases of the violation of such rights.

According to the Georgian President, It Was the Factor of Treason That Decided the Outcome of the War in Abkhazia

Analyzing the reasons for the defeat in Abkhazia, President Eduard Shevardnadze said that the republic had been weakened by internal disorders, the state had been ungovernable, and its resources had been exhausted. At the same time, according to the Georgian leader, the main factor that decided the outcome of the war was treason. This was like a stab in the back, he emphasized. Along with other facts of treason, Eduard Shevardnadze mentioned the following: Sukhumi had not even fallen when, on the instructions of one of the Russian generals, a meeting was held between Loti Kobalia, commander of the armed formations of the ex-president [Zviad Gamsakhurdia], and Igor Giorgadze [former Security Service chief, currently in hiding in Moscow], one of the former KGB secret agents, who transmitted the instruction to speed up the fall of Sukhumi and, thereby, bring another person to power.

Eduard Shevardnadze Believes That Georgia Does Not Have the Right Not To Use Even the Smallest Opportunity for a Political Settlement of the Conflict in Abkhazia

"The search for political methods is the sole path along which we have been proceeding and are continuing to proceed in order to settle the conflict in Abkhazia," stated President Eduard Shevardnadze. "However, I do not exclude that another path may be chosen, depending upon how events develop in future," he said. As he pointed out, Georgia does not have the right not to use to the very end even the smallest opportunity for a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia. Eduard Shevardnadze views the legal basis that has been created as providing grounds for optimism here. "The UN Security Council had adopted 14 resolutions on Abkhazia over a short period of time," he said, "according to which the territorial integrity of Georgia is recognized unconditionally. At the Budapest summit of EU heads of state, 52 countries, including the United States and Canada, unequivocally established that ethnic cleansing and genocide had been perpetrated against the Georgian population in Abkhazia. Almost all the CIS countries have condemned Abkhazian separatism and, at the last summit in Moscow on 19 January, they adopted a decision on the political and economic isolation of the separatist regime." As Shevardnadze said, it is difficult to implement this but much has already been done in this direction. "It is not at all out intention," he said, "that the population of Abkhazia should be condemned to starvation. However, any cargo being shipped there should be approved by the Georgian government."

Touching upon the reserves and resources for speeding up the process of settling the conflict in Abkhazia, Eduard Shevardnadze emphasized that the main thing here was that the potential regarding Russian-Georgian relations had not been exploited to the full. "One should not forget," he said, "that it is impossible to settle this conflict at this stage and in the near future without Russia." According to the president, we have to work in all directions, particularly as the positions of the president, prime minister, and ministers of defense and foreign affairs of Russia are facilitating this. As regards the peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone, Shevardnadze pointed out that we need to be patient here. "Time is needed," he said. "The decision on extending their mandate is, in many respects, connected with that difficult situation that reigns today in Russia itself."

The Georgian president also linked the question of this country's military bases on the republic's territory to Russia's role in settling the conflict. "We have repeatedly said that this problem will be finally resolved only when Georgian jurisdiction is restored both in Abkhazia and on the territory of South Ossetia. Parliament has the final word here," emphasized the president.

The Georgian president views the use of UN collective forces in the event that Russia's peacekeeping mission does not bring any result as an important resource in settling the Abkhazian problem. At the same time, he believes that European structures also could become more actively involved in settling the conflict. Shevardnadze also views as extremely important the implementation of the Caucasian factor and the initiatives that arose in Tbilisi, Vladikavkaz, and Moscow, which are aimed at achieving peace and stability in the region. At the same time, he particularly emphasized the significance of the Georgian-Abkhazian dialogue that, in spite of all the difficulties concerning their relations, is continuing. Furthermore, as the Georgian president said, he recently spoke on the phone with Vladislav Ardzinba and there exist contacts at other levels as well, which, in his view, shows that there are prospects for establishing a constructive dialogue.

Georgia: Ardzinba Announces Referendum on Abkhazia's Status

LD2404110196 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1020 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sukhumi, 24 Apr — Abkhaz separatist leader Vladislav Ardzinba has announced that a referendum on Abkhazia's status will be held in Abkhazia within the next two months. He said the need for a referendum has arisen because of Georgia's failure to agree to Abkhazia's proposal on the creation of a federal union.

According to the Abkhaz separatist leader, the question which will be asked at the nationwide referendum has already been formulated and reads as follows: "Do you wish to have closer interstate relations with Russia, or do you wish to have closer interstate relations with Georgia?"

Estonia

Estonia: Tallinn Rejects Russia's Accusations of Discrimination

WS1904135496 Tallinn ETA in English
1305 GMT 19 Apr 96

["News Release"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, April 19 (ETA) — Russian delegation reiterated to the UN human rights committee in Geneva on Friday that the Russian-speaking part of the population in Estonia and Latvia is being discriminated.

Estonian Foreign Ministry spokesman Juri Arusoo said in response that such accusations were part of Russia's official policy towards Estonia.

The accusations addressed to Estonia have not fulfilled their purpose and have been proved ungrounded, Arusoo said.

"In response to Russia's propaganda experts from numerous international organisations have visited Estonia to get acquainted with the situation. They have asserted that Estonia corresponds to the norms of international justice and that the rights of ethnic minorities are not infringed upon," Arusoo told ETA.

Arusoo went on to say that the accusations are based on Russia's official policy which regards Estonia not as a country which regained independence after an occupation of 50 years but as a country which was formed as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Leader of the Russian delegation Boris Krylov said in Geneva that the discriminatory policies against Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia have to be brought to an end.

He paid special attention to the Orthodox Church row in Estonia, saying the Russian Orthodox congregations are being harassed in Estonia now that the Constantinople Mother Church has officially recognised the Estonian Orthodox Church.

Krylov called upon international organisations and foreign powers to use their influence and authority for finding a just solution to the problem.

Estonian Foreign Ministry holds a close eye on Russia's statements and reacts to them in the UN human rights committee in due time, Arusoo told ETA.

Estonia: UN Human Rights Commission Denied Anti-Estonian Resolution

WS2204092096 Tallinn BNS in English
1836 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Apr 19, BNS — The U.N. Human Rights Commission at its spring session did not back Russia's accusations against Estonia, Heino Ainso, a member of the Estonian delegation to the commission, told BNS.

"Russia's aim was to have an anti-Estonian resolution or at least a comment from the commission chairman, but its attempts fell through," Ainso said.

In his words, Russian representatives at the commission's meeting in Geneva hinted more than once at abuse of human rights in Estonia and also delivered a fierce accusatory speech. "But, not a single state supported them," he said.

Russia's last attempt to raise the Estonian question was on Thursday when it was supposed to explain the situation in Chechnya.

A Russian delegate said an end had to be put to the discrimination of the Russian minority in Latvia and especially in Estonia, where Orthodox believers were being oppressed, Ainso explained.

Russia called on the states that had sought the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic countries for help in finding a just solution to the human rights problem, but this was treated as an attempt to divert attention from the Chechen issue, the Estonian delegate said.

The Human Rights Commission comprises representatives from 53 U.N. member nations. Its spring session lasts from March 19 through Apr. 27.

Estonia: CE Secretary-General Says Estonia's Influence To Increase

WS2204091996 Tallinn BNS in English
1836 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Apr 19, BNS — When Estonia takes over the presidency of the Council of Europe [CE], its political influence on European affairs will increase, Council of Europe Secretary-General Daniel Tarschys told reporters Friday.

"Estonia will have an opportunity to assume the role of a shaper of events. This is an opportunity some states have put to a good use. But, naturally, it depends on the presiding country how it exploits a political opening," Tarschys said.

As chairman of the CE Committee of Ministers, Estonian Foreign Minister Siim Kallas will have a say in determining numerous priorities, Tarschys pointed out.

The Estonian foreign minister will chair the committee, a leading body of the human rights organization, from May 3 until November. He will chair committee meetings and direct negotiations with the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Kallas will represent the Committee of Ministers in its dealings with the CE Parliamentary Assembly and the conference of local and regional bodies of power.

The CE secretary-general said at the news conference that Estonia had accomplished much in integrating its ethnic minorities, but that a lot still remained to be done.

The human rights organization has helped Estonia to elaborate suitable standards for language tests for citizenship applicants and is at present examining the requirements on knowing the country's constitution, the secretary-general remarked.

"We support a liberal ethnic minorities policy," he noted.

Tarschys met during his two-day visit to Estonia with President Lennart Meri, Prime Minister Tiit Vahi, Foreign Minister Siim Kallas, Justice Minister Paul Varul, parliament Chairman Toomas Savi and members of the Baltic state's delegation to the Council of Europe.

Estonian parliamentarians assured Tarschys the Baltic country would during its presidency of the CE ratify the European convention on ethnic minorities.

Meri signed 27 out of 155 CE conventions in 1993, but most of them still have to be ratified in parliament.

Tarschys said the Council of Europe was prepared to support regional cooperation among the Baltic Sea states, head of Estonia's CE delegation Kristiina Ojuland told BNS.

The CE secretary-general left the Estonian capital for the city of Tartu Friday afternoon. He will proceed from Tartu to Pskov in Russia on Saturday for a CE conference on crossborder cooperation.

Estonia: Norwegian Prime Minister Arrives To Sign Agreements

LD2204114996 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1100 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland came to Riga today. She arrived in Latvia after about an hour's delay, because the airplane could not take off in Oslo due to fog.

During the visit it is planned to sign agreements on cooperation between the customs offices of the two countries and the exchange of embassy buildings in Riga and Oslo. It is planned that during the two-day visit Brundtland will meet the state president, prime minister, speaker of the Saeima, and deputies who are members of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Commission.

Estonia: Council of Europe Chairmanship To Focus on Human Rights

LD2004144296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1233 GMT 20 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TALLINN, Apr 20 (Interfax) — When Estonia becomes chairman of the Council of Europe in May, it will pay particular attention to how human rights are observed in Russia, said Prime Minister Tiit Vahi at a meeting with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Daniel Tarschys in Tallinn on Friday.

As a country honoring all commitments of a member of the Council of Europe, Estonia will pay great attention to how other states, first of all Russia, honor their commitments, he said.

The situation in Chechnya should be resolved by political, not military, means, Vahi and Tarschys said.

Estonia's government pays particular attention to the integration of the non-indigenous population, they noted.

There are no ethnic tensions in Estonia, and the attitude to non- citizens is tolerant, Tarschys declared.

A major goal of his two-day visit was to draft a program for Estonia's activity during its chairmanship in the Council of Europe, Tarschys told a news conference on Friday.

Estonia will have great opportunities in terms of forming European policy at that time, he noted.

Estonia will chair the Council of Europe from May 3 till November 7.

Estonia: Defense Chief To Meet With NATO Leaders in Brussels

WS2404100996 Tallinn ETA in English 1403 GMT 23 Apr 96

["News Release"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, April 23 (ETA) — Commander-in-chief of Estonian Defence Forces Colonel Johannes Kert departed on Tuesday for a five-day working visit to Brussels, where he is to meet the military leadership of NATO, Leelo Linask from Defence Forces Headquarters press department said.

Kert is to attend the session of commanders-in-chief of defence forces of NATO member states and states that have joined the Partnership for Peace programme (PfP) on April 23 and 24.

The officials are to discuss the plan of NATO exercises next year and experiences received from last year's exercises, the effectiveness of PfP programme and readiness to real military cooperation, evaluate NATO IFOR mission experiences and conclusions drawn from it.

On April 25 and 26 Kert is to participate at NATO military leadership meeting SHAPEX '96, which will also be attended by Commander-in-chief of NATO European forces General George Joulwan.

Latvia

Latvia: Ulmanis, Swiss President Discuss Cooperation Possibilities

LD2104163696 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian
1500 GMT 21 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During this week's visit to Switzerland, State President Guntis Ulmanis discussed the possibility of economic cooperation between Latvia and Switzerland. At a meeting with Swiss Confederation President Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, the leaders of the two countries indicated their readiness for mutually beneficial economic cooperation. The two sides stressed that work should be started in the immediate future to draft an agreement on avoidance of double taxation. Guntis Ulmanis suggested that Swiss businessmen come to our country on a visit, and expressed thanks for assistance to Latvia in the spheres of education, ecology, and medicine.

Latvia: Norwegian Premier Arrives for Visit

LD2204172396 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian
1700 GMT 22 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland arrived in Riga today on an official two-day visit. She arrived in Latvia with about an hour's delay because the plane could not take off in Oslo due to fog.

Brundtland today met State President Guntis Ulmanis and Prime Minister Andris Skele. They discussed problems related to the enlargement of the European Union and NATO, the development of the Partnership for Peace, and the widening of economic ties between the two countries.

Inter-state agreements on mutual assistance in customs issues and on the exchange of embassy buildings in Riga and Oslo were also signed today. [passage omitted]

Latvia: Norwegian Premier, Ulmanis Comment on NATO, Security

WS2304133796 Tallinn BNS in English
0919 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riga, Apr 23, BNS — NATO is an open organization and no one other than its member states will decide on the admission of new members, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland told the Latvian president Monday.

However, attempts should be made to enchance safety by economic and political contacts as military cooperation should not be viewed as a priority, the president's office quoted Brundtland as saying.

Security in Europe is impossible without cooperation with neighboring countries as "the still existent military threat does not allow one to feel entirely safe," Brundtland told Ulmanis.

Ulmanis voiced his opinion that the competition principle should not be applied in the process of enlargement of international organizations.

"I do not support the spirit of competition with regard to the admission of (...) countries to international bodies because I consider that a common European security policy is more important," he said.

Latvia: Skele Comments on Norwegian Prime Minister's Visit

LD2304205896 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian
1300 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Concerning other countries' support for Latvia's admission to the NATO alliance, Prime Minister Andris Skele expressed his views to (?Norwegian) journalists.

[Begin Skele recording] Insofar as every country's support has to be gained for entry to NATO, and no other country outside the NATO has the right of veto to restrict it, (?it is up to all of us, and) we will be able, to demonstrate our ability, our wish, and our readiness to join this alliance. Yet I understand that for Norway, when it comes to it, the declaration will be more yes than no. [end recording]

After the farewell ceremony for Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, which took place at Riga airport, Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs gave his assessment of the visit to Latvian Radio:

[Begin Birkavs recording] Norway is a rich country. And investment is what we need most. Anyway I see very good prospects, but that is not the only thing. What is important about the documents we signed is that Norway is a NATO member. And our clear and unambiguous aim is integration into the NATO structures, and Norway is the only [member] country with a border with Russia. Thereby it has invaluable experience, and the cooperation we will get through the international structures, through NATO — even though Norway is not a European Union member — is very significant. [end recording]

During this visit several agreements were signed about economic cooperation, and it was emphasized that the construction of a gas pipeline is possible in the future.

[Begin Birkavs recording] Quite a lot is dependent on Sweden, because the gas pipeline must go through Sweden, and strange as it may seem, Norway has adopted a resolution on gas in the making of electricity. It means that they will supply the Scandinavian countries and other countries with electricity, but it is much more right to use gas, which is ecologically cleaner, and if — here is our collective position: with Norway and with Finland. [as heard] It lies with Sweden to decide whether ultimately we'll be using Norwegian gas. It means we will have two sources of gas: Russia and Norway. And that means much more independence.

[Unidentified correspondent] And relating to security issues, you had a talk with the Prime Minister.

[Birkavs] There are some matters where we [word indistinct], as you cannot compare the Baltic situation, which is the most vulnerable of the countries at the moment from a security viewpoint, with Sweden or Norway. Nevertheless I think that Norway understands our situation well, as they have a border with Russia themselves. They have their own problems in the Barents Sea. They well comprehend Russia's strategy in talks, and therefore I think we have gained in the person of Brundtland one great friend. [end recording]

Latvia: Birkavs Interviewed on Security, Baltic Cooperation

LD2204170496 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1300 GMT 22 Apr 96

[Interview with Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] NATO Secretary General Javier Solana visited Latvia last week and it is now clear NATO will be enlarged, but when will it happen? Neither is it known yet whether Latvia will be a member of NATO. Last week, we could also read in the press that unofficial Russian opinions on foreign policy deem it possible that Russia could militarily intervene in Latvia's internal affairs if it joined NATO. Is the Foreign Ministry currently considering any parallel security guarantees while it is on its way to NATO?

[Birkavs] Yes, in any case it is completely clear that the only true security guarantee is full membership of NATO. What do parallel security structures mean? Parallel security structures mean that without changing our aim of joining NATO, we work very hard on Baltic cooperation — Baltic military cooperation and we work very hard in the framework of bilateral agreements. For example, Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland is currently visiting Latvia and of course we will also have talks with her on security issues, because we have already quite developed cooperation with the Norwegian Defense Ministry. The same applies to other countries that are our neighbors looking toward the West. However, irrespective of this, only NATO can provide guarantees to Latvia.

[Correspondent] History has proven, however, that it has never been [word indistinct] for the Baltic states to cooperate [words indistinct] due to various considerations. How do you assess at the moment the possibility for all three Baltic states to really cooperate in the military sphere, and not only in the military sphere?

[Birkavs] There have been two periods in our history — one was a period of bad cooperation and the second is a period of growing cooperation. The period of bad cooperation was before World War II and the period of growing cooperation is at present. Yes, we are stronger together, but those are not our security guarantees either.

[Correspondent] How do you assess yesterday's meeting with John Mroz, the president of the Institute of East West Studies?

[Birkavs] Very positively, because we agreed on three things. We agreed on active cooperation at the level of thinking itself, i.e. at the level of political influence, because they are already working on how the world will look like, how they could influence it, and how to balance interests. We will work in three directions; one is NATO, which you have already mentioned, the second is Latvia and the European Union — we agreed on a broad conference in Latvia — and the third is economic cooperation, but in that respect that they are experts, they have a special emphasis on banking and finance sector. This cooperation will be developing within the framework of the Baltic Initiative Fund that will be founded after the presidents of the three Baltic states will be given an annual award, because the award ceremony is also a money raising campaign for the Baltic Initiative Fund that will begin its independent life after the award ceremony.

Latvia: President Expresses Concerns to UN on Refugee Situation

LD2004101696 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1700 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Europe must definitely reckon on a new wave of refugees, which will also affect Latvia, if conflicts such as that in the Caucasus are not resolved peacefully, the state president of Latvia believes. Guntis Ulmanis expressed this view in Geneva to Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees. To forestall such a possibility, Ulmanis stressed the need for the UN to take action. If individual countries are unable to solve their national problems, they become global. Ulmanis expressed the conviction that the 150 refugees currently housed in Latvia are not a problem of national significance.

Latvia: New Round of Russian-Latvian Border Talks Begin in Riga

LD1904171996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1513 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] RIGA, April 19 (Interfax) — Latvia and Russia started a fresh round of border talks on Friday, chief Russian negotiator Viktor Shikalov told Interfax.

This follows Moscow's rejection of negotiations the day before on the grounds that Riga's position was unacceptable.

Riga insists that the talks must be based on the 1920 peace treaty ceding an area of 1,640 square kilometers around the town of Pytalovo to Latvia. It has a population of 16,000, of which ethnic Latvians make up a mere 0.1 percent.

The Soviet government brought the region under Russia's jurisdiction in 1944.

Shikalov said the Latvians handed the Russian team a note on Thursday proposing restoration of the common border between the two countries. "The Russian side believes that such an agenda would imply Latvian territorial claims on Russia," he said.

But he said common sense prevailed on Friday after Riga agreed to delete the word "restore."

Shikalov said that in Moscow's view, the 1920 treaty had become invalid after Latvia's incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940. "The Russian Federation and other countries recognized the Latvian Republic as it was in 1991," he said.

Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs, speaking on national television on Thursday, said although Moscow dismisses the fact that the Latvian Republic existed before the Second World War, Riga was prepared to continue what he called "constructive talks."

The next round of talks is due in Moscow later next month.

Lithuania

Lithuania: Prime Minister, Polish Counterpart on Regional Cooperation

LD2004152596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1233 GMT 20 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VILNIUS, Apr 20 (Interfax) — It is expedient to begin to form a new joint structure — Neman Euroregion — for more effective cooperation between Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Russia's Kaliningrad Region, said Poland's and Lithuania's Prime Ministers Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz and Mindaugas Stankevicius at their talks held on Saturday in the Polish town of Augustow on Lithuania's border.

The new structure of regional cooperation will step up interaction between the four countries and make it easier for them to accomplish joint economic, ecological and transport projects, the press service of the Lithuanian government told Interfax.

According to it, during their working meeting the prime ministers of Lithuania and Poland decided to sign an intergovernmental agreement on free trade during the official visit to be paid by Stankevicius to Warsaw in June.

When the Lithuanian prime minister called for opening more check points on their border Cimoszewicz said that Poland's budget for this year does not provide for allocating funds required for these needs.

The two prime ministers confirmed that integration into NATO and other European structures is their top priority. Besides, Poland will give Lithuania aid in its efforts to join the Central Europe Free Trade Organization.

Lithuania: Czech President Declares 'Solidarity' With Vilnius on EU, NATO

WS1904134896 Tallinn BNS in English 1300 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Apr 19, BNS — Czech President Vaclav Havel made a long-anticipated move in Vilnius Thursday [18 April] by declaring solidarity with Lithuania in its strive to join the European Union and NATO.

"We share the same major foreign policy priorities: to become NATO and EU members," Havel said at a joint news conference with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas.

The two countries can only reach those aims by way of mutual cooperation. "If it is turned into a race, our goals will become more difficult to achieve", Havel said.

Brazauskas noted with satisfaction that the two heads of state shared the stance that equal starting conditions should be offered to all Central European candidates for NATO and EU membership.

"It is important that the countries had the condition set that negotiations begin at the same time," the Lithuanian president said.

Havel said preparations by Lithuania to sign a free trade agreement with the Czech Republic will open the door for Lithuania to the CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Association) market.

Both heads of state stressed that democratic development in Russia is important to all of Europe and were critical of the Russian Duma decision to declare null and void the agreements that sealed the breakup of the Soviet Union.

"Lithuania is not affected, since the Soviet Union recognized its independence before it was dissolved," Brazauskas said.

Havel, in turn, said he doesn't attribute any significance to the Duma decision as the Soviet Union no longer exists. "This is the same thing if the Austrian parliament ruled to announce that the collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian empire was illegal," he said.

During his visit to Lithuania, Havel also met with the leader of the right-wing opposition, Vytautus Landsbergis. The Czech president said he had got the impression that the government and the opposition had similar views on all most important foreign policy issues.

Commenting on a large protest demonstration that took place near the parliament seat and the president's office at the time of his meetings in Vilnius Thursday, Havel said it would seem something was wrong if there were no such demonstrations in a democratic government.

Because of the rally, in which some 5,000 people protested against economic hardships, the joint press conference of the Lithuanian and Czech presidents was transfered from Brazauskas' office to the government guest house, and the formal farewell — to the airport.

Lithuania: Vilnius To Keep Lithuanian Peacekeepers in Bosnia

LD1904194996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1709 GMT 19 Apr 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VILNIUS, April 19 (Interfax) — Lithuania will keep its international commitments on maintaining peace under the aegis of NATO and contribute to rebuilding Bosnia, says a statement of the country's Foreign Ministry on the death of a Lithuanian officer and the wounding of two Lithuanian peacekeepers in Bosnia.

The ministry expressed condolences to the family and loved ones of the dead man and sympathy with the wounded men. "The death of a Lithuanian officer and a Danish serviceman in Bosnia is a tragic and symbolic confirmation of the integrity and indivisibility of European security. These men died for peace in the whole of Europe as well as Bosnia and, consequently in Lithuania," the statement says.

Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas awarded a medal posthumously to Normundas Valteris.

At a joint news conference Brazauskas and his Czech counterpart Vaclav Havel expressed regret over the death of a Lithuanian peacekeeper.

Lithuania: Parliament Ratifies Treaties With Belarus

WS2404101296 Tallinn BNS in English 1608 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Apr 23, BNS — The Lithuanian parliament Tuesday [23 April] ratified a Lithuanian-Belarus treaty on state borders and agreements on the Baltarusia sanatorium in Druskininkai.

Also ratified were agreements on a water facility in Belarus forming a part of the Ignalina nuclear power station complex and on the People's Friendship hydroelectric power station.

All of the treaties were ratified almost unanimously.

The Lithuanian lawmakers ratified last Thursday a Lithuanian-Belarusian treaty on good neighborly relations and cooperation. But ratification of the other agreements was then postponed due to technical problems.

All documents were signed last February 6 in Vilnius by presidents Algirdas Brazauskas and Alyaksandr Lukashenka.

Lithuania: Border Problems, Talks Detailed

WS1804131296 Tallinn BNS in English
1300 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Apr 17, BNS — Lithuania says biggest unresolved problems in border affairs remain with Belarus, while Russian border guards themselves will come to Vilnius for talks.

The main problem is the inflow of illegal Asian immigrants and Belarus's unwillingness to take them back.

Grazvydas Bacevicius, adviser to the head of the Lithuanian border authority, said he didn't think the Belarusian border guards had unilaterally broken off contacts with Lithuania when they kept postponing a meeting due in their capital.

"When the weather gets warm, they themselves have loads of problems with economic immigrants and perhaps they really have not found time to meet with us," the official said.

Border leaders from both countries meet regularly, and according to the order established it is now Belarus's turn to invite the Lithuanian colleagues. The meeting was supposed to take place at the beginning of April, but until now the Lithuanian border police department has neither received an invitation nor explanation.

At the same time the Kaliningrad region border authorities will come to Vilnius to solve problems with Lithuania. Anatoliy Rachmanin, commander of the Kaliningrad region border troops, will head a delegation to Vilnius April 23-24.

It is planned to negotiate with the Russian representatives on joint actions during the coming tourist season. Many Germans would like to make the journey from the Kursiu spit to Kaliningrad, and for them certain easing of requirements in crossing the border may be made.

Kaliningrad and Lithuanian border guards will also negotiate on problems arising from unmarked state borders.

Lithuanian border police department director Stanislovas Stancikas and Rachmanin are expected to sign a cooperation plan.

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